Proletarianisation in Swaziland:

the Case of the Sugar Industry

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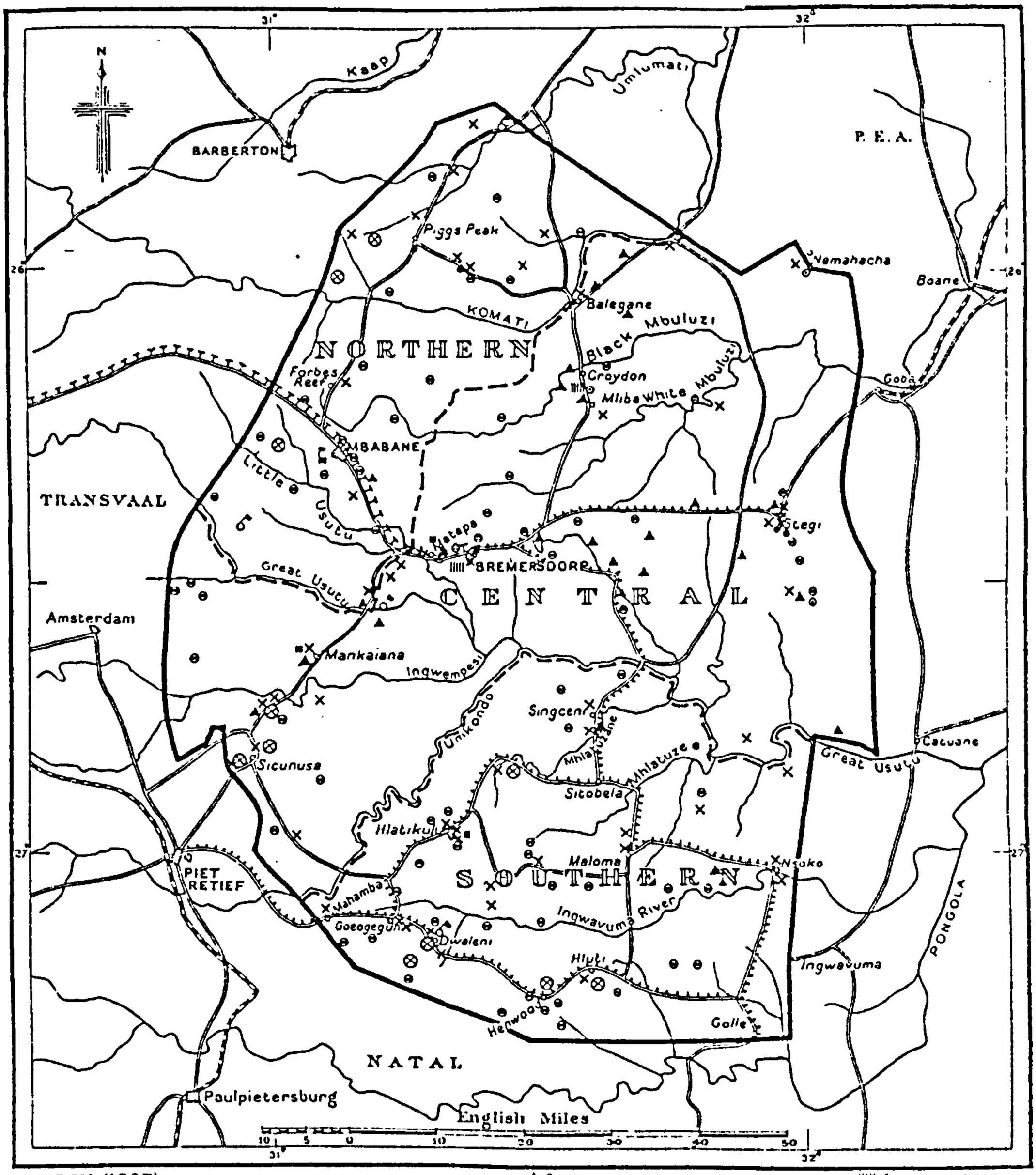
SWAZILAND



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TABLES

ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to analyse the process of proletarianisation in Swazi society with particular reference to the sugar industry in that country. We have also tried to explain why women's labour tends to be located in both subsistence and commodity agriculture, and what the implications of this are for the social, economic and political status of women in Swazi society.

Through an analysis of the historical processes which led to colonisation and the consequent land alienation, labour migration, taxation and exploitation of the Swazi people, the study has tried to show the socio-economic and political consequences of capitalist development within Swaziland over the last century. We have also discussed the emergence and decline of white settler agriculture and shown how, together with the collaboration of the colonial state, white commodity agriculture laid the basis for the development of agribusiness in the economy, especially in relation to the sugar industry.

Within the sugar industry itself, which has dominated the Swazi economy for the last thirty years in terms of land use, numbers of workers employed, and the size of national revenue generated, there is an ongoing struggle between labour and capital, which manifests itself in various forms, both overt and covert. The history of working class resistance in the industry vis-a-vis capital and the colonial and neo-colonial state, is discussed with a view to better understanding this section of the Swazi proletariat in anticipation of the revolutionary changes

which are sweeping across the Southern African sub-continent.

INTRODUCTION

As Southern Africa is launched into the 21st century on a tidal wave of revolutionary struggles, the need for a clear and correct understanding of the history and character of the working class in Swaziland has become even more imperative, especially to Swazi progressives. This study is an attempt to understand the processes and forces which have shaped and influenced the emergence and development of a proletariat in the Swazi economy over the last 100 years.

Many of the studies on Swaziland have focused on the history of the ruling Dlamini class as it transformed itself into a pre-capitalist ruling class and later into a collaborationist class with imperialism in the colonisation and exploitation of the Swazi people. This approach presents the history of the rulers as the history of the Swazi people and denies the people their own class history. This is not only incorrect but it is also very class biased and arrogant.

Alternatively, some scholars on Swaziland have adopted a developmentalist approach which pretends that there are no class, race or gender differences in Swazi society, and aspires to proposing and initiating development projects which are totally inadequate in dealing with the needs and aspirations of the majority of Swazi people.

More recently though, there has begun to emerge a new and different type of scholarship which makes a serious effort to analyse Swazi society in relation to

class and race. Gender is still merely referred to in many of these progressive analyses, with the exception of the work by a handful of mainly women scholars.

This study has been written as a contribution to the new scholarship on Swaziland which is essential in the mobilisation and conscientisation of the working people of that country. The study breaks new ground on several issues.

It is the first study to analyse the process of proletarianisation in that country and especially to focus on the working class in the sugar industry. Although much work remains to be done on this sector (and the rest) of the Swazi working class, especially in terms of its consciousness and organisation vis-a-vis the state and capital, this study can be considered a pioneering work in the analysis of the Swazi working class.

Also, this study has for the first time looked at the position of women in agriculture, in both pre-capitalist and capitalist Swazi society, tracing the relationship between class and gender oppression and the emergence of a male dominated pre-capitalist state on the one hand, and the exploitation of women's labour in capitalist agriculture during the colonial and neo-colonial periods of Swazi history.

And finally, through extensive field work and interviews, we have gotten to know the Swazi workers in the sugar industry, talked with them about their views and aspirations, identified with them politically, and written a work which is for and about the Swazi

proletariat. No other study on Swaziland has taken such a clear proletarian position, and we hope that this will serve as a precedent for more politically partisan work in that country. As academia comes to recognise the myth of an 'objective' (i.e. bourgeois) social science, so the scope for proletarian partisanship in scholarship becomes more available to progressive scholars.

In Chapter One we make a critique of French Marxist literature and we make use of the advances which have been made by progressive French scholars like Meillassoux, Terray, Bonte, et al, to analyse pre-capitalist Swazi society and to locate the gender issue within this social context. We trace the development of a male dominated Swazi state through warfare and the restriction of access to women of sources of wealth and class power. The location of women's labour in subsistence agriculture and in the household, and the implications of this for women in terms of class and gender status are also discussed. The use of women as captive labour and as a source of tribute labour in pre-capitalist society is analysed in relation to the oppression and exploitation of women as producers and reproducers of wealth and labour in the society.

Chapter Two is a transition chapter which gives a brief analysis of the latter half of the 19th century and the dissolution of the pre-colonial Swazi state followed by changes in the class structure and the relations of power as a consequence of colonial and capitalist encroachment on the society. This period is presented as a period of primitive accumulation, when, through the

system of 'concessions' and with the collaboration of the boers, British imperialism took control over Swaziland. The Swazi people resisted, but were defeated, and their defeat ushered in a new era of colonial and capitalist oppression and exploitation during which the former Swazi ruling class was transformed into a collaborationist aristocracy.

In Chapter Three we trace the development of capitalist commodity relations mainly in agriculture and mining, and the transformation of land and labour into commodities which capital exploits for the generation of surplus value. Dialectically connected with this process is the emergence of a proletariat in Swaziland, transformed in the relationship with capital both inside the country and in South Africa (through migration). The mechanisms of labour extraction and the responses of the working people to colonial oppression and capitalist exploitation are discussed in this chapter, as well as the role of the traditional aristocracy in this process. Also raised is the issue of female migration and the concept of marginalisation as a means of understanding the way women have been affected by the development of capitalism as a social group and as members of particular classes, and their response to capital both at the level of production and outside the direct production process.

This leads us to Chapter Four which deals with the emergence and decline of a white settler class in the Swazi economy during the first fifty years of this century. The entrenchment of settler colonialism and its relationship

with the colonial state is posed as an issue which requires fuller attention, and we have tried to show how white settler agriculture provided the basis for the development of agribusiness and Multinational Corporation dominated agriculture, especially in the sugar industry.

Chapter Five is about the Swazi working class in the sugar industry. In this chapter we have given the background to the development of the industry and have shown how cheap Swazi labour is a source of great profit, as has been characteristic of the sugar industry all over the third world where cheap, Black labour has been exploited, first as slave labour and later as 'free' labour. The general characteristics of the workers are given i.e. in terms of gender, types of work, attitudes to child labour, wage rates, geographical distribution, etc., as well as the conditions of life and work and the health and safety of workers. The importance of technology in the exploitation of the workers in the industry is discussed, especially in relation to the maintenance of a division of labour which maintains gender differences among the workers, while serving the interests of capital.

Chapter Six is a chapter on resistance and consciousness. After a preliminary discussion of the concepts of resistance and consciousness and how the Gramscian concept of ideological hegemony is important in our amplification of workers' struggles, the chapter tries to analyse the various forms of struggle adopted by sugar workers at Ubombo Ranches which is the main focus

of our empirical analysis. Relying upon the interview with the workers' leaders, we have tried to show how sugar workers at Ubombo Ranches organise and mobilise themselves to face the challenges of capitalist oppression, especially in relation to issues like racism, wage rates, housing, trade union organising and other forms of repression.

In conclusion, the study argues that there is a proletariat in Swaziland and that the workers in the sugar industry form an advanced section of this working class which must take a vanguard position in the transformation of Swazi society, and be more actively involved in the struggle by the oppressed South African people to overthrow capitalism and racism in that country. The success of the South African revolution has fundamental implications for the Swazi working class and the Swazi people as a whole.

Chapter One

Early Forms of Swazi Stratificiation:

a critique of the literature

French Marxist Anthropology: interpretations and implications

Over the last twenty years, there has developed a significant literature on pre-capitalist societies, especially on African social formations.(1) Polemics have raged and 'schools of thought' have arisen, flourished and declined into academic obscurity, all as part of the attempt to apply the concepts and methodology of historical materialism to the analysis of pre-capitalist social formations.

Marxist anthropology has increasingly challenged the very foundations of traditional (structural-functionalist) anthropology, which had for so long dominated this field of social science, and, like all other areas of social science, traditional anthropology has come under a concerted attack from progressive scholarship.(2) As Terray would argue, anthropology must be annexed by historical materialism, and there is general agreement among Marxists that anthropology must be rid of its reactionary and conservative ideological content.(3)

How this is to be achieved has been the bone of contention over which numerous battles have been fought, and even after two decades of rigorous and committed theoretical and empirical work, little consensus has been reached.(4) One of the major causes of disagreement among Marxist anthropologists on how to conceptualise pre-capitalist (African) social formations is the lack of consenses about the meanings attached to concepts used in the analysis of the same phenomena.(5)

The problem can be traced back to the theoretical and political differences between Meillassoux[6] who was influenced by Balandier[7] and Godelier who was in turn influenced by Levi-Strauss.[8] Meillassoux had a very important impact on Terray and Rey, and on the general trend of French Marxist anthropology.

The weaknesses and inadequacies of traditional anthropology in explaining the reality of social life have rightly served as the basis for attacks on the conservative and generally colonial inspired character of structural functionalist analysis, and the terms like kinship, lineage clan, etc. have also been criticised as having mystified and often mis-represented the real nature of social relationships in pre-colonial social formations.[9]

But unfortunately, most of the literature which starts out with these criticisms of traditional anthropology, and especially French Marxist anthropology, which developed mainly as a reaction to conservative analysis, has not totally broken with the past on this score. As Kahn and Llobera argue, 'On the contrary, the writers....appear to accept certain concepts and methods of traditional anthropology in a rather uncritical way....these writers appear to share the view that 'societies' as conceived by traditional anthropology are relevant units of analysis and that the comparative method, as used by nineteenth century evolutionists, allows them to treat existing 'primitive' societies as pre-capitalist. While denying a unilinear evolutionism, the French writers appear largely to adopt the implicit evolutionism of traditional anthropology.'.[10]

The use of terms/concepts which have been formulated within a definite philosophical and conservative ideological framework to re-interpret the social history of any society, is bound to create problems of conceptualisation and meaning. Every concept derives from a particular philosophical and historically defined premise, and is heavily loaded with ideological and political implications. If Marxist analysis is to provide a correct and better alternative theoretical framework, then it must break completely with traditional bourgeois anthropology, and apply only those concepts which reflect the theoretical and ideological framework of historical materialism. The need to undertake indepth analysis of the relationship between concepts and the theoretical frameworks in which they appear is essential for the further advancement of social/scientific analysis.(11)

Related to the above criticism is another more serious problem confronting Marxist anthropology - the debate over the determination 'in the last instance' of the economy, especially in the analysis of pre-capitalist societies where the development of the productive forces was often low. The use of concepts like kinship and lineage - as defined by traditional anthropology - to explain the formation and character of classes and class relations in these societies, has increased (or led to) the confusion and difficulties of the analysis.

Essentially, the following questions have been posed by Marxist anthropologists concerning the relationship between kinship systems and system of production: Under what conditions can kinship relations function to regulate

social relations of production? Under what conditions do they become the dominant social relations of production, and under what conditions does a kinship system, no longer the dominant force in production, constitute itself as the ideological form of other productive relations? What is the status of those structures such as kinship which intervene in production and how therefore does 'determination in the last instance' by the economy operate? Is it valid to assume that because identical kinship systems are found in societies with different conditions of production that there is no relationship between kinship systems and systems of production? In other words, is kinship a product of particular historical conditions or does it present a degree of autonomy which makes its analysis irreducible to determination by production?(12)

In one way or another, all the Marxist anthropologists have expressed the notion of the dominance of kinship in pre-capitalist social formations. The notion of 'determination in the last instance' by some structure or form is a central pre-occupation of all the literature. Meillassoux(13) first expresses this in his analysis of Guro society, where he argues that kinship relations acted as relations of production, and kinship is defined as a social concept. Therefore, kinship relations are social and can adapt to economic requirements. Maurice Godelier(14) argues that kinship is the dominant principle in lineage societies just as the economy is dominant for capitalism. Kinship becomes the dominant principle of social organisation when it performs the 'functions' of both superstructure and infrastructure, and this dominance is

a consequence of the fact that kinship in these pre-capitalist societies actually functions as relations of production.

For Terray,[15] kinship is the complex result of the interplay of the economic, juridico-political and ideological phases of the mode of production. Therefore, the multifunctional character of kinship systems corresponds to simple forms of the organisation of production, that is to simple forms of the division of labour and co-operation. The dominance of kinship is related to the mode of realisation of surplus in societies organised on the basis of kinship. But the mode of realisation of surplus depends on the superstructural characteristics of kinship which intervenes to define those social groups that occupy different functions in production in all societies in which there is no autonomous economic sphere, i.e. all pre-capitalist societies. Terray's work is very important particularly in terms of developing the relationship between kinship structures and the formation of classes in pre-capitalist societies.

Pierre Rey[16] expresses his views on kinship within the definition of lineage societies. He argues that lineage societies are segmentary societies in which the major principles of social life, and in particular the essential units of production, are built upon the basis of real or fictive kinship. Between such units there is a system of regulated marriage exchange which is in general associated with a complex web of other exchanges; the division of labour rests primarily on the sexual division of labour and the division relating to social age,

and the marriage system is the central means by which the dominant class exercises its power over the dominated.

Finally, if we look at the more recent work by Bonte[17] which has benefited from all the earlier debates, we can appreciate not only the difficulties which the term/concept of kinship still poses for progressive Marxist analysis, but also the greater analytical clarity which has been reached so far.

Bonte adopts the strategy of developing an analysis by extracting certain arguments from Terray and Godelier. Although he is critical of Terray[18] and tends to lean more towards Godelier's definition of kinship as multifunctional and having a specifically economic, infrastructural function as well as others, Bonte does eventually end up with a position very similar to that of Terray, except that he takes Terray's argument a little further. He argues that if we are to explain not merely the dominance of kinship, but also the fact that kinship can have an economic function and can be transformed under the effects of economic determination in the last instance, we must ask ourselves what the real nature of economic determinism is? If we leave the question unanswered, there is the ever present temptation to postulate an external determination by the productive forces, considered as autonomous and periodically entering into contradiction with the relations of production.[19]

Bonte tries to overcome the functional determination of kinship, which characterises the work of Meillassoux, Godelier, Terray and Rey, by introducing the notion of an 'invisible hierarchy of functions'. If one applies this

notion to the analysis of kinship structures, one finds that these structures are dominant in certain societies not because these societies are institutionally organised through kinship, but because kinship structures perform a particular series of functions. It is the invisible hierarchy of the functions of kinship structures. This dominance is explained in the last instance by the function played by kinship relations in production.

Although Bonte eventually falls back onto the notion of 'determinism' of some sort, he realises a very important conclusion - that only concrete analysis and not theoretical deduction alone will allow us to construct the concepts of the constitution, variation and transformation of different modes of production. Concrete analysis serves to locate the conditions of dominance of a particular social structure, a dominance which results from the fact that this structure functions as relations of production and particularly, governs the realisation of surplus, the ultimate precondition for social reproduction.

A further criticism of the French Marxist anthropologists is that of ahistoricism. Most of the research and empirical studies which have been undertaken have concentrated on a small section of African societies - for example, Guro society in the case of Meillassoux's work, or the Mbuti in the case of Godelier. From these micro studies, general conclusions have been drawn about the nature and character of pre-capitalist African societies, which do not have similar historical experiences, neither do the same structures play the same role in all African social formations. While no doubt these authors would claim to

have surpassed the mechanism of neo-evolutionism by stressing the central importance of the productive relations and the dominance of the non-economic, they nevertheless appear, ironically, to preserve the concept of society as basic unit of analysis. Lineage societies are therefore treated not so much as segments of a wider social system containing states, but held up as typical of an evolutionary state....In short, for the French Marxist school a Marxist anthropology is not so much a history and pre-history of the social formations under study, as an attempt to provide a critique of liberal anthropology from within its own assumptions....The anthropological concept of society is left unquestioned.'(20)

Kahn and Llobera also raise another very important question in their criticism of French Marxist scholars i.e. that of the relationship between concepts and fieldwork. Every researcher goes into the field equipped with a set of concepts which will serve as the basis for the formulation of questions; the emphasis put on certain types of information; the ideological thrust of the data collected, and its synthesis. 'It seems clear, for example, that fieldwork as currently conceived in traditional anthropology brings with it a particular limited view of relevant units of analysis,'(21) and the use of certain concepts affects very fundamentally the researcher's conceptualisation of the society, the groups in that society, and the importance one gives to certain structures in that society. In the case of pre-capitalist societies this is particularly important, because the nature of social relations is often unclear and shrouded in mythical forms.

One can extend the above criticism to a more general problem which other Marxist scholars face when trying to apply the conclusions reached by French Marxists in their limited empirical studies. In the case of pre-colonial Swaziland, it is almost impossible to make the same generalisations which Godelier et al make for the Mbuti or other social groups and societies in West Africa or in Central Africa. First of all, these were only segments of larger societies and therefore their particular social character and historical experiences are not even universal to their own societies. Secondly, they are part of social formations which are located in a different geographical region of the African continent and their colonial experiences were often very different from those of the societies of Southern Africa. And finally, there is a particular difficulty in applying materialist concepts which have been formulated within an analysis of capitalist relations of production to pre-capitalist societies, especially since the socio-economic forms of the latter were often unclear and in their nascent stages of development when some of these societies encountered capitalist domination. Therefore, one must be cautious, and instead of replicating certain conclusions about the nature of class societies, one should rather make careful comparisons where possible.

In spite of these criticisms and disagreements, at the conceptual and definitional levels, there have been some advances made in terms of opening up the past in a new and different way. By using concepts drawn from the framework of historical materialism in the analysis of pre-capitalist societies, Africa's socio-economic history, mystified and

shrouded in the obscure terminology of traditional anthropology, is beginning to re-emerge in its real and true meaning.[21] Concepts like 'mode of production'; 'division of labour'; 'social formation'; 'class'; although open to a certain degree of definitional variation within the different 'schools', have become essential in the analysis of pre-capitalist social formations. In the latter part of this chapter we shall attempt to analyse the social structure of pre-capitalist Swazi society, using a materialist analysis. A central objective of this exercise will be to trace the emergence and development of classes in pre-capitalist Swazi society, and in the course of so doing, we shall make a specific analysis of the place of women and the role of ideology in nineteenth-century Swaziland.

The foregoing criticisms of French Marxist anthropology serve as an important basis upon which an analysis of Swazi society will be made. We shall extract what is relevant and useful for our analysis without adopting the approach or conclusions of any particular 'school' of French Marxism. This is a necessary eclecticism which will enable us to take advantage of the wealth of information available and yet being fully aware that none of these studies nor their conclusions can be treated as universally applicable. Certainly, the method of materialism is without doubt universally applicable, but the application of particular concepts to specific realities is not. Of course our 'eclecticism' does not exceed the boundaries of materialism, and during the course of the analysis we shall integrate various theoretical propositions to clarify the specificity

of pre-capitalist, and later, colonial and capitalist Swazi society. The concepts of kinship, lineage and clan will not be the focus of our analysis. Rather, we will try to show how classes emerged, how surplus was extracted and accumulated, and if kinship ties do play a role in this process, it will be only as part of a more fundamental process of class formation and the subordination of the producers, especially women, rather than as specific structures having any particular dominance or determination in the process of social development. As Terray put it '...the royal road to a Marxist analysis of society and history lies in the study of classes because the concept of class is what one could call a 'totalising' concept in the sense that one must refer to all aspects of social reality in order to define it.'(22)

Conceptualising pre-colonial Swazi society

As Marx argued; 'The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way.'(23)

Although conservative and some liberal anthropology has continued to deny the existence of classes and therefore the class struggles which have ensued in pre-colonial African societies, this is because they start from a premise which cannot admit to the existence of classes and class struggles, simply because such an admission would be

contrary to the ideological and political interests which their work represents.(24)

In the case of Swaziland, the existence of classes and gender differentiation in pre-colonial times has been confirmed not only by the royal geneology which goes back some thirty generations,(25) but also by the very thorough and comprehensive research work done by Hilda Kuper, especially her earlier work which attempts to reconstruct Swazi social structure.(26) Although Kuper writes within the framework of structural-functionalist analysis which attempts to emphasise the 'harmonious' relations between the rulers and the people in the period up to the WW II, her work is a valuable source of the abundant evidence of differentiation and inequality - both class and gender - in Swazi society.

But these class and gender relations are shrouded in mystical forms and beliefs which manifest themselves through cultural and social rituals on the one hand, and on the other there are distinct and identifiable processes and structures in pre-colonial Swazi society through which surplus wealth was generated and accumulated which express very clear class relations of oppression and exploitation of one class by another.

There was a definite process of differentiation in motion in Swazi society, and there was a division of labour which served as the basis of this differentiation between the producers and the rulers, between men and women. Phil Bonner's recent work on the historical development of the pre-colonial Swazi state (1820s - 1880s) is an important milestone in the attempt to reinterpret Swazi

history. In his introduction, Bonner says this about his study; 'In portraying the processes involved in the consolidation of the Swazi state, it documents the growing stratification of Swazi society, and the institutionalisation of various mechanisms of surplus appropriation, which it sees as the basis of a profound societal change.'(27)

Essentially, Bonner succeeds in establishing the existence and character of the pre-colonial eighteenth century Swazi state, and in linking the military actions of the rulers, both internally and externally, to the need for the accumulation of wealth and control over state power. He discusses the functions of the regiment system with regard to the extraction of tribute labour from male peasants, for the benefit of the rulers, and shows how this regimental system was central also to the consolidation of state power by the ruling class - which was drawn mainly from the Nkosi Dlamini clan. He argues that 'The permanent presence of the regiments at the capital conferred benefits of a variety of kinds. It withdrew young men from the productive cycle of the homestead into that of the capital, and so constituted a form of surplus appropriation under the guise of military conscription; it socialised the young men of the Emakhandzambile(28) Chiefdoms, especially those of their chiefly lineages, into the new Swazi state; it reinforced the coercive power of the centre at the expense of the periphery and it provided an avenue of upward mobility for the sons of commoner lineages, thereby dissipating potential unrest. Lastly, of course, the regiments raided and exacted tribute, appropriating surplus both for the aristocracy and for the redistribution in the

barracks, which further weakened their ties with the homestead and cemented their loyalty to the king.'(29)

Instead of taking the analysis one step further and showing some of the consequences of this movement of labour for the homestead, and for women in particular, Bonner leaves the analysis unfinished. One very important issue which clearly stands out is the relationship between the migration of labour and the accumulation of wealth by certain social groups. There is a definite relationship between these two factors even in the pre-capitalist history of Southern African societies, and the case of Swaziland is a good example of how not only has labour been extracted from the homestead and utilised outside homestead production, for purposes of surplus production, but also that women have been reproducing the labour-force without the constant assistance of the men even before capitalist development in the region. This question will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter, but it is important to note that certain forms of exploitation appear in more than one mode of production, even though the social relations characterising each mode differ. The migration of male labour, albeit internal to Swazi society at this particular period, is not unique to colonialism and capitalism. The implications of this for a correct and clear analysis of pre-colonial and recent Swazi history are very important, especially in relation to the questions of women and gender differentiation.

Although Bonner analyses the structures and mechanisms through which the nineteenth century Swazi state operated, and some of the processes of ideological and ritual

legitimation by the kingship in the absence of the 'typical' lineage descent structures, he does not deal adequately with the relationship between the different classes in the society. In fact, Bonner barely establishes the existence of classes, because he speaks almost exclusively of the ruling class. He makes occasional statements like, when Mswati died, in 1865, '...an infrastructure of state had been firmly established, so that the country now divided more on class than on ethnic or chiefdom lines, and looked for resolution of its grievances in the machinery of state.'(30)

This is merely a statement of the existence of classes and of a state structure, but it requires further discussion of the character and nature of these classes and their relationship to each other. When Bonner does make a class analysis, it is a discussion of the rulers, and the only struggles he dwells upon are those within the ruling class, i.e. conflicts over succession between the king and the chiefs; conflicts over the payment of tribute by certain chiefs;(31) conflicts between the king and the Queen-mother over the control and use of state power, and struggles over the major sources of legitimation like the rain-making rituals or ('muti').(32) Bonner says 'The challenge that this (ritual authority) came to represent to royal authority is difficult to understand, unless one appreciates the close identification between religious and political activities in Swazi thought. In common with most other pre-capitalist societies, nineteenth century Swazi society did not conceptualise its various activities in terms of the discrete and sharply defined categories of

religion, politics, economics or whatever. Religious and secular life were interwoven into each other at all levels, and no hard and fast divisions existed in everyday life between religious and political roles. Consequently...in Swaziland the assertion of independent religious or magical powers almost invariably connoted an attempt to usurp political authority as well.'(33)

But of course, it is in the nature of most pre-capitalist societies, especially those in the process of class formation, that power relations and class interests will be shrouded in ritual and ceremony. Nevertheless there is a definite relationship between political control and religious beliefs, and the legitimation and representation of political power is often coupled with or closely related to the legitimation of religious beliefs and rituals.(34) Bonner himself goes on to explain the role of religion and ritual in Swazi politics then and presently. It is one of the most difficult tasks of progressive social science to unravel and demystify the <u>real</u> relations and interests beneath ceremonies like the iNcwala,(35) but Bonner leaves the task half-done. The fact that Mswati took drastic and decisive action to eliminate those chiefs who dared to threaten his control over the state and over those sources of popular legitimation, is clear evidence that the rulers did recognise the importance of certain rituals for continued state power, even if they did not make an obvious distinction between politics and religion in daily life. Bonner's analysis is restricted by an unfortunate narrowness which is the consequence of a lack of the recognition of <u>class struggle</u> between the major

classes, i.e. the aristocracy and the peasantry. His work certainly had the potential of providing a detailed and important analysis of the character of relations between the rulers and the ruled in pre-colonial Swazi society, especially since he had access to a tremendous amount of primary data and historical information, archival reports, etc. which is accessible only to researchers who live in South Africa, and who are permitted by the racist state to use this material in the various state controlled libraries in that country.

Therefore, in spite of his initial declaration to write what might be called a 'popular' history of the Swazi people, Bonner nevertheless tends to see this history predominantly through the actions of the rulers. He puts too much emphasis on ruling class politics, describing in great detail the machinations and events surrounding the lives of the Nkosi-Dlamini clan. Any reference to the Swazi people is only in passing, and even then, it is without an adequate class analysis of the nature of the people's lives.

Consequently, we end up with an account, very well researched, no doubt, but which once again tells of the glory, and sometimes unfortunate mistakes of the Swazi rulers, their cunning and shrewdness in dealing with the other Southern African peoples, especially the Zulu, and later on during the latter part of the nineteenth century, how they managed, for a while, to outwit the invading white settlers with their diplomatic skill. It is an historical account of the activities of a particular class, and the Swazi people are once again silent. Thus, while

it is a very important and useful work, especially since there is no other historical work published yet which attempts to re-interpret the history of the Swazi from a materialist premise, the work falls short of the task it set out to achieve, mainly because of these analytical problems and substantive omissions.

In relation to the appropriation of labour by the rulers, Bonner discusses the institutions and structures through which mainly male labour was exploited, but once again, this process does not enlighten us about the character of these producers of surplus wealth. Neither are we told how the payment of tribute labour affected the reproduction of the peasantry, nor their relationship to the rulers in this context. When this relationship is mentioned, it is always cast in a harmonious context, as though there was never any resistance to the exploitation. But in a society where classes were already clearly visible and where different class interests are bound to cause conflict, how is it possible to portray such a history without mentioning the struggles which are an inherent and central aspect of the social process?

Therefore, on the one hand, Bonner succeeds in discussing the structures and processes of state formation; the integration of some clans and the destruction of those which resisted the dominant Dlamini group; the accumulation of wealth through various means, i.e. tribute labour, raiding for cattle and captives, and the small-scale trade with the Portuguese and the Boers in ivory, captives and live-stock. War is the dynamic force underlying the process of state formation throughout the

nineteenth century, and the emergence of a ruling aristocracy. Then, on the other hand, he never gives specific attention to the peasants, whom he refers to as 'subjects', or 'under-classes'. When referring to the question of captives, he is reluctant to define them as slaves within the context of slave-master class relations.(36) Relying uncritically on Hilda Kuper's description of what a captive or Sigcili was in Swazi society, he argues that 'Captives in Swazi society were enveloped in such a range of protections and reciprocal obligations as to make it difficult to conceive of them as a sharply differentiated class (his emphasis)....Like captives in many other parts of Africa moreover, they could rise to positions of authority and trust, and completely outgrow any possible stigma that may have attached to their origins....To talk of a slave class would therefore be to attribute an unwarranted permanence and definition to a shifting and amorphous group. Equally, to focus all attention on rights and mobility as opposed to enduring obligations would be to fall into the trap of projecting a ruling class ideology generated to mask for all concerned the real conditions of slaves. Ultimately the inescapable fact is that slaves were captured by slavers to exploit their productive and reproductive powers, even if their manner of incorporation into their adoptive society precludes them being collectively considered a slave class.'(37) Bonner goes on to compare the differences between West African societies and Swazi society, and concludes that, 'As a result, the trade in captives from the Swazi was initially of miniscule proportions, and even at its height it cannot have exceeded

much more than a few hundred a year.'(38)

The problem is that Bonner tries to deal with the phenomenon of captives/slaves in Swazi society outside the concept of class. Because he has not analysed the life of the people, he misses the significance of captive labour and the implications it might have had for the Swazi people and for women. While he is able to describe the mechanisms and structures of state formation, he is unable to relate the phenomenon of captives (who were mainly women and children) to the character and needs of the emerging Swazi state.

Further, he misses the particular significance of captive labour in Swazi society, which clearly shows that captives/slaves do not have to constitute a separate class to be correctly analysed. They can be understood as part of the oppressed class, entering the society through captivity and becoming integrated into the life of the oppressed classes. This is a very interesting feature of Swazi society, and although Kuper might claim that one could not tell a captive from a 'free' Swazi, this is only at the descriptive level, and is a tautology, because the point is to uncover those relations which were not readily seen, but which in fact defined the status of the captive and his or her life in the society.

By uncritically accepting Kuper's definition of the life of a captive in pre-colonial Swazi society, Bonner falls into the very trap he sought to avoid - that of being unable to explain the phenomenon adequately, within this particular context. He then projects captives as an integral part of the society, able to marry (or be married

off by their 'owners' if they were women), able to participate in council, but this of course was applicable only to male captives, and as far as Kuper and Bonner are concerned, the only problem was '...the absence of own kinsmen, the lack of supporters in ritual and limited economic security'.[39] Later we shall show that in fact the life of the 'free' Swazi was burdened with all sorts of obligations to the chiefs and the rulers, and a 'subject' was often described by the chief as his 'dog', or 'beast'.

By looking for a slave class, and of course not finding one, Bonner relies on the traditional anthropolgical perspective and fails to emphasise the role of captive labour in the process of accumulation, and once again overlooks the question of women's labour in the process of social history of Swazi society. Captive labour does not have to be called 'slave' labour to be correctly understood. If the term 'slave' becomes a constraint on understanding the specific nature of relations of 'unfree' labour in pre-capitalist' society, then it must either be redefined or substituted. Furthermore, the process of incorporation into the 'adoptive' society is not a crucial element in defining the relations between captives and their 'masters', and although these relations cannot be generalised for all situations, neither can they be confined to definitions derived out of a different set of conditions.

Although Bonner argues that the number of captives were small,[40] the phenomenon of captive-taking went on for about a hundred years, and extended into the relations between some of the Boer settlers in the Transvaal

and the Swazi rulers. The point is not the numbers (the ruling classes have always been small), especially since the Swazi people have never been a big nation, but rather it is the significance of the phenomenon in understanding the character of the society. Just as Bonner is unable to decide what to call the children of rebellious chiefdoms which were destroyed, he says, 'Their children....joined the ranks of Swazi captives, which involved labour appropriation of a somewhat different kind. The point which now arises is the extent to which the appropriation of labour power in this particular form became an object in itself, and not merely the by-product of rationalisation of economic and political controls...'(41)

Interestingly, if we look at Kuper's final paragraph on captives in An African Aristocracy, she concludes that 'The economic conditions of the traditional society did not allow of a slave group, since every man, irrespective of his status, was required as a warrior, and every woman as a worker in the field.'(42) Here Kuper partially expresses the division of labour in pre-capitalist society, albeit in a very general and ambiguous manner....that definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically and without mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production. The social structure and the state are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really

are, i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.'(43)

Women in pre-capitalist Swazi society

One of the major draw-backs of existing material on pre-colonial social formations, especially of African societies, is that it begins from the assumption that past history is not only the story of the rulers, but also that it is male history, i.e. that the main actors in society are men.(44) Any discussion or mention of women and men outside the framework of the ruling class is because they are treated either as unique or special individuals, or because they performed certain functions within the state apparatus.(45) Seldom is an attempt made to analyse the history of all classes in pre-capitalist societies or to raise the gender issues surrounding essential processes of reproduction and the allocation and exercise of power.(46)

An important objective of this study is to locate women within the context of Swazi social history. All the historical and anthropological studies of Swazi society so far have merely made mention to only a few women from a particular class - the ruling class. Women like Thandile, Sisile, Lobatsebeni and Gwamile, who bore the heirs of the rulers, are described in interesting and often romantic terms. For example, Bonner says 'Swaziland has a tradition of exceptional Queen-Mothers, but even among this distinguished company, Thandile stands out. A leading figure in Mswati's early struggle for survival, she had gone on to initiate a series of crucial reforms, and was (is)

accorded enormous respect!'(47)

Credit is certainly due to these women, who mainly because of their class position in the society, were able to act, not only as women but as political beings in the making of a particular phase and part of Swazi history. We give them all due acknowledgement, except that their actions must be seen primarily in terms of the class interests which they represent. Although these women did wield substantial power, they never ceased to be women within the patriarchal structures of Swazi society. At crucial moments in that history, when a woman in such a position dared to attempt to take complete control over the state, her gender became a primary obstacle. The case of Sisile, wife of Mswati (who reigned from 1839 - 1865), is a clear example of the contradiction between class interests and gender relations within the ruling class and in the society as a whole. As Bonner himself concedes 'In the structure of Swazi politics the position of the Queen-Mother is significant, not only because of the enormous power that she wields, but also because she is so often imported from outside. This often meant that the Queen-Mother would act as an innovative force in Swazi politics, injecting new ideas and new practices into Swazi life. Thandile provides a classic example of this pattern, but in her own way, Sisile also carried on the tradition... whereas Thandile attempted to alter the distribution of power between the centre and the periphery, Sisile sought to re-allocate it at the centre itself. She expanded her own power in a disproportionate fashion and, what seemed worse in Swaziland's male-dominated society, sought to

involve women far more in the decision-making processes of the realm'.(48)

Basically, however, she challenged the men for state power, and she clashed with them because they believed that they were the only legitimate holders of complete state power, and therefore she was caught and strangled to death in 1881.(49) It is interesting to note how easily Bonner falls into the same trap which he proposes to avoid in the introduction of his work, i.e. he claims that his work is an attempt to write a popular history, and to put more emphasis on the people, and avoid the myopic perspective characteristic of traditional anthropology. But he portrays the rulers as the 'innovative force', 'injecting new ideas and new practices into Swazi life', forgetting that it is the producing classes who are the innovative force in any society, and that knowledge is created by the experience of the society as a whole, and not only by so-called outstanding men or women.

It is the majority of women from whose ranks these few 'exceptions' came who must be given primacy, if Swazi women are to be correctly placed within the process of Swazi social history. The processes through which women were integrated into the ruling class and the forms of oppression, subordination and exploitation to which they were and still are subjected to within the household and in the society generally, must be identified and discussed. In all the literature on pre-colonial and colonial Swaziland women are portrayed as passive, long-suffering, obedient objects. Never are they seen as active, intelligent beings, struggling within the

confines of patriarchal oppression and exploitation, and playing a crucial role in the society and its history. They are more often referred to in passing only in relation to the economic and socio-cultural functions they perform within the household and in the society. They are portrayed as objects of particular rituals and taboos relating to marriage, birth and death. Their lives are shrouded by mystery, and their relationships to men and to the rulers are mystified through backward cultural and ideological forms.

A significant starting point in the reconstruction of the social history of a society is the level of development of the productive forces, and the character of class and gender differentiation. It is only by analysing the structure of production, the development of tools and methods of production and investigating the possibilities of surplus generation and accumulation that we can identify the predominant social relations, especially in terms of the role and position of women in production and surplus accumulation.[50]

In the case of Swaziland, most of the literature tends to confirm the fact that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Swazi had established some kind of territorial area, whose boundaries expanded or contracted depending on the strengths of neighbouring states, and whose population size was similarly affected.[51] What is clearly confirmed by the work of historians like Bonner[52] is that, at least a century before colonial domination was imposed on the Swazi, the processes of state formation and class differentiation had been set in motion. Kuper acknowledges

this process when she says, 'Throughout Southern Africa in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, small tribes linked by kinship were being organised into strong military states under ambitious rulers.'(53) Schapera, another eminent anthropologist argues that 'The Swazi, indeed use the word 'LIVE' for both 'tribe' and 'tribal society', and the same combination of meanings, with its implication that community and land are inseparably connected, is found in other Nguni languages and in Tsonga.'(54)

But, the acknowledgement of the formation or existence of states does not explain how they came about and what their character was. Kuper goes on to claim that 'This important change in the structure of the traditional political units is primarily related to greater economic pressure on the land. Being peasants, their existence depended on the soil, and they moved when the yield was considered too low or the area too limited.'(55) Therefore, while on the one hand Kuper seems to be implying that state formation for the Swazi was a response to land pressure due to poor yields and population growth, an argument which several historians and anthropologists of the region would subscribe to,(56) she makes an historical leap (of almost half a century) into the period of colonial encroachment (mid-1840s) to account for the wars and extensive movement of peoples in the region. She says 'But the tribal population was increasing, and land to the south, formerly open to African expansion, was being taken by the whites. Conflict between the tribes and between African and whites became inevitable.'(57)

Schapera is also ambivalent in his analysis of the processes of state formation in the region. On the one hand he admits that war can be a major force in the amalgamation of communities into states, and he gives several examples of this in Southern Africa, including that of the Swazi. 'Recruitment by conquest more often occurred when a tribe deliberately pursued a policy of expansion or sought a home in some other region. The local inhabitants then had to surrender or fight, and if defeated their only alternatives were to flee or become subjects to their invaders. Early in the nineteenth century several large 'Kingdoms' were created this way. The Zulu under Shaka (1816 - 1828), the Swazi under Sobhuza I (1815 - 1839) and Mswati (1840 - 1868)....'(58) Because Schapera rejects the Marxist conception of the state and class struggle,(59) he is hard put to explain why 'Every tribe of which we know, whether or not still independent, has traditions of a ruling dynasty of its own and can usually name the present head of that dynasty, and no myths or legends have been recorded of a state of society in which chiefs did not exist. It seems probable, therefore that the distinctive position of the royal family is due not to conquest, but to some other factor, though undoubtedly the chief and his kin gained in power and prestige as their tribe expanded by force of arms.'(60)

By starting from the materialist premise that the state arises out of the need by one class to control and limit access by another or other class to the social surplus which that society produces or procures, we are able to identify the sources of accumulation, and the

position of women as producers of wealth and as a form of wealth.[61] Myth and legend have tended to mystify the real power relations underlying kinship and lineage structures/hierarchies through which class relations are generally articulated in pre-capitalist societies. Characteristic of most pre-capitalist formations, wherein emerging class relations were shrouded in mythologies about the origins of the dominant clan or ethnic group thereby legitimising their privileged position vis-a-vis other social groups in the society, the history of the Swazi has also been dominated by an oral tradition which asserts the right to the Dlamini clan to rule - as a class.[62] 'This hierarchy may be justly regarded as foreshadowing the elementary forms of social stratification. It is a product of history and justifies itself by reference to myth - the founding ancestors being regarded as gods or heroes, or at least as their companions....Among the Swazi of Southern Africa, the first king known to oral tradition founded the leading clan from which the sovereigns are recruited, and the lineages forming this clan are hierarchised according to their relation to the primordial line.'[63]

The emergence of state structures through which surplus could be extracted and controlled, blurred the line between ethnic privilege and class rule. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Swazi state was clearly and firmly based on the domination of one class by another, and ethnic mythology has become essentially an aspect of the ideology of the state.[64]

The Swazi ruling class emerged in the mid-nineteenth

century by combining agriculture and war as sources of surplus accumulation, and women's labour (as well as male labour) played a central part in the whole process of class and state formation. 'Undoubtedly, the decisive progress due to the practice of agriculture must be ascribed to women....who in primitive society devote themselves to gathering fruit, and usually remain close to the dwelling place, were the first to sow the seeds of the fruit they had collected, so as to facilitate the provision of food for the tribe.'(65) But, their proximity to the homestead was the least important reason why women in Swazi society were engaged, and still are engaged, in agriculture. The relationship between Women and Agriculture was/is a consequence of certain historical processes which relegated women to various reproductive tasks which were directly related to the emergence of a male dominated state, and society. One of these historical processes, in the case of Swaziland, was War. In fact, there seems to be a definite relationship between the use of women's labour (or the location of women's labour) in agricultural production and war as an activity through which men could accumulate surplus. By the mid-nineteenth century, women's labour in agriculture had assumed a very clear reflection of the social and gender differentiation occurring within Swazi society.

The Swazi had two main sources of subsistence - agriculture and cattle - and in terms of the former, one can say that they produced enough food to satisfy a subsistence level of existence. Although Hilda Kuper does not seem to have been very impressed by the

agricultural achievements of the Swazi peasantry,[66] Murdoch[67] argues that in fact the Swazi were well aware of those areas of the country which provided good fertile land and pasturage. He says, 'The choice of Lomahasheni series, one of the country's most fertile and stable soils, as pasturage and fields by perhaps the first Swazi clans to settle permanently with the object of cultivating land may have been fortuitous....The (remaining) fifteen original clans, the main body of the Swazi tribe, settled around 1750 in the cool Middleveld sector of good soils.... The Central Middleveld, with extensions a few miles north and south in the same attitudinal zone, is known simply as 'LIVE' or 'The Nation'....Thus all five choicest arable areas with mean annual rainfall exceeding thirty inches had been tribe or clan nuclei by 1850. Swazi are pastoralists, but have not been purely pastoralists for two or more centuries and their crop husbandry - first millet and sorghum then maize - has been concentrated on what are, or were in the virgin state, better than average soils. Land use has long reflected land capability.'[68]

This knowledge of the arability of the land by the peoples who occupied Southern Africa is further confirmed by Schapera and other anthropologists and historians. One of the most important indicators of subsistence levels of food production in pre-capitalist societies, is the population size of society. According to some estimates, Sobhuza I had about 2,000 followers, '...but with the Pedi and other vassals perhaps 10,000 inhabitants of the country then is not an inflated estimate. A doubling thereafter every twenty years (from the 1830s), due more

to immigration than natural increase, would result in the 100,000 mark being reached at the turn of the century.'[69] The movement of populations from one area of the region to another and consequently changing their political loyalties, was partly due to the wars of state formation within the region, but also very much due to droughts (especially in the 1820s), cattle diseases and food shortages. Discussing the varying population sizes of the four main peoples of Southern Africa,[70] Schapera says 'These differences in size are related partly to mode of subsistence, since the nature of the food supply necessarily determines how many people can live together continuously.'[71]

Phil Bonner's work on the development of political and administrative structures by Swazi kings like Sobhuza I and Mswati in the first half of the nineteenth century, which served to concentrate and integrate the various ethnic groups into an emerging Swazi nation, corroborates the earlier analysis by anthropologists like Issac Schapera and C. Daryll-Forde[72] about the emergence of states in the region.

Therefore, we can conclude from the above analysis that by the mid-nineteenth century the Swazi people had established territorial occupation of a large area of southeastern Africa, and the ever-increasing population was successfully reproducing itself agriculturally. The significance of cattle as an important source of sustenance and as a source of wealth, will be discussed below. But it is very important to take the analysis of Swazi subsistence agriculture a step further and show what the role of women's labour in the production process was,

how the division of labour and the payment of tribute was structured, and to assess the effectiveness of subsistence agriculture in terms of surplus accumulation.

Women's labour was expanded within agriculture in three different but related forms; as Household/Family labour; as Captive/Slave labour and as Tribute labour.

Household/Family labour

The concept of Household/Family labour, within the structure of subsistence production generally refers to female labour and children's labour, and especially in societies like that of Swaziland where the periodic migration of male labour out of the household - albeit for short periods of time during the course of the year to perform various tributary tasks for the rulers, ranging from waging war on neighbouring communities to food cultivation in the gardens and fields of the chiefs and king - meant that women's labour was the main source of reproduction within the peasant household.(73) The importance of this can be seen in the dual tasks women had to perform within production - they had to grow vegetables in gardens as well as cultivate crops in the larger fields. 'The land was first cleared of bush and trees by the men. The women then had to break up the soil, plant the seed, remove the weeds, keep off the granivorous birds and other pests, and finally reap and thresh the crops. Their methods of agriculture were crude, the principal implement used being a wooden or iron hoe, and neither manuring, irrigation nor rotation of crops was practiced.(74)

In his discussion of the evolution of communal land

tenure and the emergence of early forms of property, Ernest Mandel explains that 'It is logical, within the framework of a co-operative organisation of labour, that the cultivatable land, cleared communally, should remain common property and be redistributed periodically. Only the garden around the dwelling, cleared by the family alone, or the fruit trees they have planted, evolves towards the stage of private property.'(75)

Among the Swazi, married women, who have only usufruct rights to land by virtue of being married by a man,(76) were allocated small patches of land usually along the river bank, where they were expected to grow those foods like vegetables which would be served with the main staple - in this case sorghum and millet, and later, maize.(77) Men never worked in the homestead gardens because that was considered 'Women's Work', and the vegetables produced therein were seen as 'Women's Food/Crops'.(78) It is interesting therefore to note how, at this early stage of social development, with a low level of productive forces in the society,(79) that a certain form of 'private ownership' was emerging within the structure of 'the garden', and gender subordination was clearly manifested at the level of food production. Superficially, it would appear that men did not work in the gardens because this task had been designated as 'women's work' - but the question is why were the gardens worked by the women (and children) in the first place? It is too simplistic to assume that one can adequately explain such a division of labour merely by referring to the sexist nature of Swazi society (or any other society

for that matter). Rather, it is more probably because women spent more time in the vicinity of the homestead and they ended up doing most of the reproductive work. Consequently, those agricultural tasks which women performed, besides the communal productive activities they undertook with the men in the larger fields, were socially defined, by men, as 'women's work'.

What is more important to stress about this phenomenon is that the narrow confines of 'garden production' did not provide women with the basis for the development of extended reproduction (and trade), but instead seems to have emphasised the derogatory attitude that men adopted towards women and agriculture - thereby entrenching the subordinate status of women in a male dominated society.(80)

We would like to suggest that there is an historically specific relationship between the low social status of women, their role in (subsistence) agricultural production, the lack of access to political and economic power, and War as a means of accumulating wealth and high social status. And on the other hand, the fact that agriculture in Swazi society did not provide the main source of accumulation of wealth for the ruling class, and because men, through warfare, had access to cattle (and women and children as captives) which became the main source of wealth and social status, women's work in agriculture was socially denigrated by men, and male tasks were deemed more important and socially superior.

Speaking generally about the phenomena of pastoralism and agriculture among the peoples of Eastern and Southern

Africa, C. Daryll-Forde captures the character of the relationship between pastoralism (which could be described as a male occupation) and agriculture which was mainly women's work. '....in Eastern Africa from the equator to the eastern half of Cape Province, pastoralism exists in a hybrid culture as a male economy in juxtaposition with female tillage. The eastern Bantu of this vast region (not only raise their herds wastefully and use them ineffectively), but at the same time limit their agricultural production by relegating practically all the work of cultivation to women....there are many indicators that the complex pattern of ritual and belief concerning cattle developed among southward moving pastoral peoples, by the integration and hardening of their customs when they were in contact and were often displacing cultivators.'(81) It is peculiar that while certain literature on the relationship between pastoralists and cultivators seems to argue that the latter tend to have a superior attitude towards the former,(82) in this case where the gender relations express an aspect of the division of labour, the 'pastoralists' (men) look down on the 'cultivators' (women).

Within the household, women's labour was also expanded into other aspects of reproduction - besides child birth and child rearing - which when seen in relation to male tasks, indicates the low levels of technology and specialisation within the homestead and in the society on the one hand, and on the other brings out the gender divisions very clearly. The Swazi, like many of the peoples of Southern Africa who were establishing

themselves as social entities in the region at that time, had begun to exploit the great mineral wealth of the region, shaping iron into agricultural implements and weapons of war. 'The smithing, if not the smelting of iron is found nearly everywhere in the Old World among both agricultural and pastoral peoples and extends as far as eastern Cape Colony and the western coast land of New Guinea. Iron knives, sickles, and in most areas hoes, facilitate the work of cultivation, while iron weapons and utensils are of great value in other phases of economic life.'(83)

Once again, the gender issue served to delineate those spheres of craft specialisation that women could participate in - and these were directly related to reproduction within the household and the preparation and preservation of food - but which were not a source of accumulation for women, and, men had complete control and forbade women access to the spheres of agricultural and military technology. According to Hilda Kuper, 'Smithing was a hereditary occupation requiring long apprenticeship and surrounded by taboos. The smithy, with its flaming forge and elaborate bellows of goatskin, was built a distance from the homestead, and women were not allowed to enter.'(84)

Just as numerous taboos and restrictions were used to restrict women's access to control over those spheres of production which had a high economic and social status,(85) so women were expected to produce those articles used in daily reproduction, like grass mats, weaving and pottery. As Hilda Kuper pointed out, 'Pottery making survives as a special craft of women who, using the coil technique,

produce different sizes and shapes of drinking and cooking vessels of considerable beauty and symmetry, decorated with simple geometrical designs. The kiln is a hollow in the ground, covered with dry bush...'(86)

It must be pointed out, however, that the limited craft specialisation within the society did not play any significant role in the accumulation of wealth and class differentiation within the peasantry as a class, but it certainly had very important implications for the different kinds of work performed by women and men, and it was a clear indication of gender differences within the household and in the community. This rather extended quotation from Issac Schapera though concerning a wider group seems to summarise very well the general character of gender relations between women and men in the household and in Swazi society, and the political, economic, social and cultural and religious implications they had for the allocation and exercise of power within both social spheres.

'The low degree of specialisation in industry meant that there was a general even level of skill, and that not of a very high standard, although occasionally people might be found prepared to spend much trouble and care over the making of their utensils and ornaments. It meant also that trade and exchange were not highly developed. The smith, it is true, always sold his wares for cattle and grain, while women making better pots or baskets than others could sometimes barter them for their content in grain, or skilled craftsmen in wood dispose of their products in the same way. But since on the whole each household was normally able to produce the bulk of what it

required for its own use and consumption, trade did not play any considerable part in the economic life of the Bantu.'(87) He goes on to confirm the subordinate status of peasant women, which is still sanctioned by customary law in most of Southern Africa, and particularly in Swaziland.(88) 'The life of a woman was on the whole regarded as less significant than that of a man, and every aspect of Bantu life reflected the difference between them. Preference was given to sons, and a woman who bore daughters only suffered under a stigma....The participation of women in the religious life of the community was limited in the main to magic, the practice of which was open to dually-qualified persons of either sex. But owing to the ritual impurity associated with menstruation, women could take no leading role in sacrifice or other active phases of worship. They were never consulted on questions of tribal policy, and all the political offices were kept exclusively in the hands of the men....Again, whereas every man could hope to be his own master at some time during his life, a woman, barring exceptional circumstances, was legally a dependent as long as she lived. Before marriage she had to submit to the authority of her father or, failing him, of her husband and, on his death, of some senior male relative of his.'(89)

Female children were socialised from an early age (as were male children), into the tasks and roles they were to perform as children and as adult women, within the household and within production.(90) Gender and class subordination were mystified within the household and in the wider social context by taboos and rituals which

essentially served to exclude women from certain spheres of power, and on the other hand entrenched their subordinate status as producers and reproducers in an economic, social, political and physical sense. Many of the mechanisms of socio-cultural and political (ideological) subordination have persisted into present day Swazi society, and we shall attempt a further discussion of some of these issues in the following chapters.

What we have been able to establish thus far is that the relationship between the subordinate status of women within subsistence agriculture and in the household as spheres of power and reproduction must be related to the relative insignificance of agriculture, within Swazi society at that time, as a source of wealth, power and status and the control by men over important sources of accumulation - i.e. cattle. On the one hand, women's physical processes of reproduction - i.e. menstruation and childbirth - have been mystified and manipulated by men as a way of effectively excluding women from the important economic, political and religious spheres of power and authority, thereby allowing men to exercise control over women's productive and reproductive capacities.

Captive/Slave Labour

In this section of our discussion on women's labour as Slave/Captive labour in pre-capitalist Swazi society, we shall try to bring out the relationship between women and children as captives - and therefore as captive labour in agricultural production - and the low status of women in agriculture and within the society generally. As indicated in the foregoing discussion of household labour,

there seems to be a definite link between the location of women's labour in agriculture and the low status of women socially, which is related to the domination by men of certain sources of wealth i.e. cattle.

Therefore, to understand on the one hand the significance of cattle in the power relation between men and women and between classes in Swazi society, it is necessary to identify the sources of such wealth and power.

War, during the last century in this case, was the major vehicle through which cattle and women and children were acquired, by Swazi men, and as a consequence of captivity women came to occupy a lower social status and the tasks they performed were also socially denigrated.

The role of war in the formation of pre-capitalist states in Africa, and in the case of Southern Africa in particular, has been acknowledged by various historians,(91) political analysts,(92) and anthropologists.(93) But not a single one of these eminent scholars has analysed the social implications of war and captivity for gender relations within any of the African societies at any period in time until the present day. Women are mentioned in the history of various African societies only as part of the booty which was distributed - together with children and cattle - to brave warriors who had distinguished themselves in battle. For example, in his discussion of Yoruba society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, C. Darryl-Forde says, 'Prisoners of war and large numbers of women and children from the raided towns and villages were carried off as slaves.'(94) He goes

on to explain that 'Women slaves were cultivators and child bearers and were both more numerous and more valuable than men.'(95)

Richard L. Roberts, in his discussion of the rise of the Segu Bambara and Segu Tokolor warrior states of Senegal between 1712 - 1890 says, 'Professional warriors disdained agricultural production. Their self-perception was related to their occupational opposition to both cultivators and merchants. The bulk of the warriors' subsistence was derived from the labour of their wives. It was therefore in their interests to retain a portion of their female captives (jonmusou).'(96)

In the literature on Southern Africa, there is abundant reference to the connection between war and the accumulation of wealth by men, and although anthropologists like Hilda Kuper and Issac Schapera do not make a direct link between warfare and women as part of the rewards for victory, this discrepancy is probably due to their conceptualisation of the role and status of captives and the forces underlying state formation. H. Kuper in particular insists that captives (she does not specify the gender of these captives, but we are aware of the generalised practice by the victors of killing the men - especially with the development of the short-stabbing spear - and taking women and children as slaves/captives), in the circumstances of Swazi society early last century could not be regarded as 'slaves' in the conventional sense of the concept, because she says 'The concept of slavery, of regarding a person as a thing to be bought and sold on the open market was, and is, alien to the Swazi.'(97)

As indicated in an earlier critique of the interpretation of slavery and the use of the concept by H. Kuper, a criticism which can be extended to P. Bonner, by tying the meaning of the concept of slavery to the operation of open commodity exchange relations - i.e. slaves as commodities which are bought and sold - these two authors try to deny the existence of unfree labour within the specific conditions of class formation in Swazi society.(98)

Slavery does not only manifest itself in 'open market exchange' but it must be understood in its various forms and specificities: Kuper does not deny that an unequal relationship existed between tigcili (slaves) and the king, chiefs and Swazi peasants (men and women). The fact that slaves were not referred to openly as 'slaves', does not change the more important fact that a slave did not occupy the same social and political position as a 'free' peasant in Swazi society, as Hilda Kuper herself explains.(99)

What is more interesting in relation to our analysis of the position of women as captives is that, as a consequence of war and the capture and use of women and children in agricultural production by men (whether they are described as the woman's husband, master, protector, patron, etc.) the word 'slave' was and still is applied to women in describing their gender and social status vis-a-vis men.

Hilda Kuper reluctantly admits this when she says 'The word sigcili (singular) and the abstract quality bugcili are sometimes figuratively applied to a wife, and to her status in the husband's home.'(100) (my emphasis) The inadequacies of structural functionalism as an approach,

in reflecting reality in its true existence are clearly shown by the limited analysis which H. Kuper makes of social, political and economic phenomena as they were manifested in pre-colonial (and colonial) Swazi society. There is absolutely no reason why phenomena should not be understood and correctly analysed for what they really are, in any society, using a correct methodology.

As Balandier puts it 'In short, there are no societies without political power and no power without hierarchies and unequal relations between individuals and social groups. Political Anthropology must neither deny nor ignore this fact; on the contrary, its task is to reveal the particular forms adopted by political power and the inequalities on which it relies in the so-called 'exotic' societies....Power, influence and prestige result from conditions that are now better known, such as the relation with ancestors, the holding of land and material wealth, the control over the men who can be put into battle against external enemies, the manipulation of symbols and ritual. These practices already imply antagonisms, struggle and conflict.'(101)

Turning to the socio-cultural manifestations of unequal gender access to cattle as the main source of wealth, we note that women and cattle were (and still are to a large extent within subsistence production) juxtaposed economically and culturally and ritually. On the one hand, women and cattle were important because of their dual capacity to produce and reproduce - i.e. women cultivated the land and bore children who were an economic asset, especially if they were female;(102) cattle can reproduce

and increase in number, thereby increasing a man's wealth, in addition to being used as beasts of burden.(103) After the introduction of the plough in the mid-nineteenth century, cattle became central to cultivation and the relationship between women and cattle changed.(104)

Women and cattle were also status symbols for the man, and the more of both he had, the wealthier he was in the community. It is rather surprising how on the one hand Hilda Kuper is able to articulate this issue so well, and yet on the other hand she constantly denies this connection in Swazi society in terms of the subordination of women. For instance she says very clearly, 'Wealth can be discussed (in Swazi society) under the headings of land, cattle and women. All are described as impahla (goods) and over each category the umnikati (owner) has various rights, which must be reconciled with the rights of others....'(105) presumably males!

On the other hand, women and cattle were kept ritually apart, and various taboos were formulated around women's menstrual cycle to define women as unclean and therefore unfit to touch or care for cattle. An interesting situation emerges where women and cattle are important because they both have the reproductive and productive capacity, and yet the process necessary for women to reproduce (menstruation) is used to stigmatise women and deprive them of contact with and or access to cattle and their products i.e. milk.

Swazi women were even forbidden to go into or near the cattle byre when they were menstruating, because the men claimed that their 'uncleaness' would supposedly

cause the milk in the cows to dry up. The ridiculous limits to which rural (male) idiocy can be stretched! Cattle were associated with men, culturally, in the language, in the expression of power relations in the household - 'the man is the bull of the homestead' - and nationally, in terms of gender and class expressions - 'the king is the bull of the nation'. The language expresses the chauvinistic and sexist nature of the society generally, and the particular patriarchal[106] and gender relations within the Swazi household.

Therefore, we can see that the co-existence of pastoralism side-by-side with cultivation within the Swazi society of the nineteenth century (and present day to a certain extent) was an expression of the gender definition of forms of reproduction and the power relations which either activity implied respectively. Women, as captive labour located within agricultural production, were a means by which men and the rulers (who were men), were able to expand surplus production - albeit for use-value essentially - while on the other hand, women, like cattle which were also part of the booty of war, were a source of wealth, social prestige, gender and class power for men.

Women's labour as Tribute labour

Mandel asserts that 'The use of prisoners of war or captives of any kind as slaves....constitutes one of the two most common forms in which society is divided into classes. The other form of this same primitive division of labour is the payment of an imposed tribute to part of society.'[107] The third form which women's labour assumed

within the political economy of nineteenth century Swazi society was that of tribute labour. In addition to producing food crops and making various household utensils, women had to work, for certain periods of time in the year, in the gardens and fields of the Queen Mother and the other wives of the king. The Swazi kings have always had many wives, and the Queen Mother - the king's mother or his first wife if his mother was deceased by the time he came to power - lived in her own 'capital', usually a distance away from the main capital where the king lived.(108)

The separation of the Queen Mother from the king had various implications for her authority vis-a-vis the male ruler (and his male advisors), and in essence the Queen Mother had merely formal power and authority in terms of control over the state and its structures. The king was the ruler - she was a co-ruler in the formal and ritual sense only - but she had no real power. This was so because Swazi society was and still is a male dominated society, and the pre-capitalist Swazi state emerged in the early nineteenth century as a male dominated state. The presence of the Queen Mother in another part of the country served both administrative and political purposes. On the one hand, certain state structures could be decentralised and the administration of outlying areas of the kingdom be carried out from the Queen Mother's capital. This also served as a stabilising influence on the area - especially the southern part of Swaziland which was closer to the Zulu who were a persistent source of anxiety for successive Swazi rulers,(109) and it helped to consolidate state power and restrained any dissenting

elements.

The Queen Mother was more of a female symbol, supposedly having ritual and magical powers relating especially to rain-making and fertility. She was a symbol of motherhood, womanhood, obedience, moderation - all the 'virtues' which characterise a subordinate and submissive attitude on the part of women towards male and class authority. In cases when she rebelled against her powerlessness (in terms of state power), she was quickly punished by the male rulers.(110)

In terms of the payment of tribute, men were organised into regiments which, 'when the regiments were not fighting, they served as labour battalions, particularly for the aristocrats...'(111) As P. Bonner clearly shows in his study of the Swazi rulers during this period (1840s), male regiments were a means by which the male rulers were able to extract labour out of the peasant household, and utilise it for purposes of warfare and agricultural production. Bonner's argument is essentially that the regiment system (of men) was a clear expression of the operations of a tributary state. Basing his argument on Meillassoux's thesis on the relationship between local elders and chiefs and young men (warriors) and the access to cattle as an essential factor in their reproduction - i.e. cattle as bridewealth,(112) Bonner argues that the consolidation of a tributary state in Swaziland in the 1840s had the consequence of shifting power from the local chiefs and elders to the central authority, in this case to Mswati. He says, 'Not only was the king's ritual support deemed essential for the

successful prosecution of war, but the king's bounty created ties of personal loyalty between himself and his soldiers, lessening their dependence on local elders and chiefs. Once bridewealth was available from the regiments, new homesteads could be formed by the conscripts without the same direct intervention of the elders and local chiefs. The tributary state was penetrating and rupturing the self-sufficiency of the homesteads, setting up new cycles of reproduction in which the organs of state occupied a pivotal position. The new cycle of reproduction moreover reproduced itself over time, progressively regularising and legitimising the new status quo.'(113)

While Bonner argues very convincingly that the payment of tribute in fact underlied the character of the established pre-capitalist Swazi state i.e. tribute mainly from chiefdoms whose populations were effectively integrated into the Swazi state especially during Mswati's reign (1840 - 1860) the extraction of tribute (in labour and in kind) as a systematic process, was possible only after Mswati had consolidated his rule (in the 1860s). As Bonner himself points out, 'It was no longer so much a conflict between competing visions of society, founded on lineage and tributary systems, but a struggle between classes, however partially or incompletely formed, within a single society sharing common norms....The new-found coherence to the Swazi state found expression in a number of different forms. From the 1860s one hears no more of Emakhandzambile (those found ahead) revolts and their struggles were

directed less towards dismantling or abandoning the tributary state than seeking internal adjustments within the existing order of things. Tribute in manpower (my emphasis) to the regiments, and in labour and produce to the chiefs, was supplied on a regularised basis, the proceeds of warfare being furnished in return. Cultural homogenisation also proceeded apace. Socialisation in the regiments and in the councils of the nation hastened the diffusion of common cultural practices and norms.'(114)

First of all, Bonner describes the existence of a 'tributary state' during Mswati's reign, without defining or explaining what he means by the concept 'tributary state'. He assumes that the payment of tribute in labour and produce through the regiment system, the diffusion of Swazi cultural practices and norms to conquered populations and the absence of rebellions or attempts at succession during this period (1840 - 1865) is sufficient evidence of the existence of a tributary state. While these phenomena were certainly general manifestations of the existence of a state system with a relatively well organised military structure through which tribute could be extracted from the peasant households (in the form of male labour) and from the formerly autonomous chiefdoms. Bonner does not discuss the character of social relations between those who paid the tribute (the peasantry) and those who extracted it (the rulers). It is not enough merely to say that Mswati, by the mid-nineteenth century had established military and political control over certain communities and integrated them into the Swazi state, without discussing the relations of power in terms of the

extraction and payment of tribute in class terms. The assumption underlying Bonner's treatment of the relations between rulers and ruled seems to be one of class harmony, and the only contradiction seems to be that between 'local elders and chiefs' on the one hand, and the central authority - the king on the other.

The second problem with Bonner's analysis is related to the above assumption of harmony between the main classes (the peasantry and the rulers), and more importantly to the absence in his study of an analysis of the peasantry as a class, and of women as active producers within that class. Because he does not discuss the peasantry as a social class, producing within a specific division of labour (based on gender differentiation) and largely determined by their relationship to the rulers (chiefs and king), Bonner ignores or underestimates the implications of the regiment system for the reproduction of the peasantry and for the division of labour within the household. For Bonner, the most important element in his study of the Swazi peasantry is the relation of power between the chiefs and the central authority. The young men (emabutfo) are the pieces on the political chess-board in the struggle which was raging between the chiefs and the king over the consolidation and centralisation of state power. Central control over the labour of young men meant less power for the chiefs. Even the concept of reproduction is used to mean the expression of male power - the consolidation and reconstitution of power from one political arena (the chief's locality) to the central state apparatus and the king. 'Capping, and in a sense symbolising, the

transformation, was Mswati's instruction that his largest regiment, the Nyathi, be allowed to marry without the payment of bridewealth. The substitution of royal for local authority in the vital sphere of homestead reproduction had been decisively, if not necessarily permanently, advanced.'(115)

This leads us to the third problem - that of the absence of any discussion of women's labour as tribute labour. Bonner seems to equate tribute labour with male labour only, and there is hardly mention or discussion of women's labour, especially in relation to the payment of tribute to the chiefs and to the king's wives. Presumably because Bonner depends so much on Meillassoux's analysis which tends to subsume women and women's activities (agricultural in particular) under male activities and male politics,(116) he completely ignores the role of women's labour in the reproduction of the peasant household, and in the reproduction of the ruling class. Neither does he discuss the implications of male tribute for the reproduction of the peasant household, or for the character of the division of labour within peasant production. Therefore, he seems to be unaware of the dual tasks (agricultural) women have to perform, within the peasant household, and in the reproduction of the chiefs and the female members of the ruling class as well.

The recruitment of women into regiments was done through the marriage institution, which was the criterion used to divide women into age-regiments and their labour was mobilised and allocated to chiefs and the female households of the ruling class. Although Hilda Kuper

writes about this process in the present tense in her work entitled An African Aristocracy (1947), she was actually describing a process/system which pertained more to the mid-nineteenth century Swazi society. 'The women's age classes (sic) are essentially working teams; they weed, thresh, winnow, brew beer, shell meilies, cut grass, and plait ropes. Most of their work is for the head of the local unit (chief), and they may be summoned even more often than men....'(117) Participation in these 'regiments' 'Do not give women particular political, economic, religious, or social power; they are primarily the units through which commands for service are executed.'(118)

Conclusion, within pre-capitalist Swazi society, women's labour in agriculture assumed essentially three forms, which were related to the reproduction of the peasant household (household/family labour); the accumulation of wealth by men through warfare (captive/slave labour), and the reproduction of the ruling class - especially the female members of the ruling class (tribute labour).

Consequently, unless one discusses the Swazi peasantry as a class, and recognises that there are specific gender and class relations underlying and affecting the character of inter and intra class relations, one cannot discuss Swazi social history fully, especially in terms of the different forms of women's labour and the role it played in class and state formation during the last century.

This chapter has attempted, in a small and limited way, to raise issues around the methodological and

historical perspectives of social and political anthropology to the social history of African societies. Using the case of Swaziland in the last century, specifically the first half of the nineteenth century, and attempt was made to reconstruct at a general level, the specific character of gender and class relations within agriculture, in relation to the process of state and class formation, and to establish a fuller historical picture of the past, in order to have a better understanding of the next period in Swazi history - that of colonialism and the development of commodity relations and a class structure which reflects capitalism as the increasingly dominant social system in twentieth century Swazi society.

Notes

(1) Leading French anthropologists who have pioneered the study of pre-capitalist African societies using a progressive analysis include C. Meillassoux, E. Terray, M. Godelier, P.P. Rey, P. Bonte and more recently scholars like P. Rigby and J.S. Kahn and J.R. Llobera have also given attention to this subject. A useful source of reference on past and on-going discussions and debates of this topic can be found in the Journal Critique of Anthropology and the Journal of Peasant Studies.

(2) There has also been a wide proliferation of Marxist literature in o t her social science disciplines like Sociology, Politics, Economics and Law. See Gutkind P.C.W., Cohen, R. and Copans, J. (eds.) African Labour History, 1978, Sage Publications, USA.

(3) Terray E. - cited in Kahn, J.S. and Llobera J.R. - 'French Marxist Anthropology: Twenty Years After', in Journal of Peasant Studies, 1980 - 1981.

(4) The differences and consensus among French Marxists over the last twenty years is well presented in Kahn, J.S. and Llobera, J.R. op. cit. and in Kahn and Llobera (eds.) 'Towards a New Marxism or a New Anthropology', in The Anthropology of Pre-Capitalist Societies', 1981, Macmillan Press, London.

(5) Concepts like 'infrastructure'; 'superstructure'; 'economy'; 'causality', etc.

(6) 'If one can talk of the failure of French Marxist anthropologists as a group, this is due to

the fundamentally different theoretical and political perspectives of the two chefs de file - Meillassoux and Godelier. At the theoretical level the main bone of contention...was the structuralism of Levi-Strauss ...the different factions of French Marxist anthropology were waging a war by proxy: the ideological war between Levi-Strauss and Althusser. Politically, the main line of divide was between those who were close to the Communist Party (of France) and those who were critical of it and militated in leftish groups' - Kahn and Llobera, 'French Marxist Anthropology: Twenty Years After', op. cit.

(7) 'The work of G. Balandier is not so well known in the Anglo-Saxon world, but his dynamic functionalism shaped the formative stage of people like Meillassoux, Terray, Rey and others...The fact that "French Marxist Anthropology" has an Africanist bias is undoubtedly due to the paramount influence of Balandier, and indirectly to the impact of British anthropologists like Gluckman and Fortes.' Kahn, J.S. and Llobera, J.R. 'Towards a New Marxism or a New Anthropology', in The Anthropology of Pre-Capitalist Societies, Kahn and Llobera (eds.) (1981) Macmillan Press, London, p. 272.

(8) See Kahn, J.S. and Llobera, J.R. op. cit. pp. 270-272.

(9) Meillassoux's arguments have generated debates on various issues, like the position of women in society, lineage systems, kinship, classes, etc. E. Mandel, The Formation of the Economic Thought of

Karl Marx, 1971, NLB, London, pp. 124-126, provides an interesting critique of the French Marxists and their application especially of the concept of 'modes of production'. See also, Kitching, G. 'Politics, Method and Evidence in the Kenya Debate', in Bernstein, H. and Campbell, B. (eds.) Contradictions of Accumulation in Africa, 1985, Sage Publications, London, pp. 115-151, for relevance of pre-colonial analysis.

(10) Kahn, J.S. and Llobera, J.R. 'French Marxist Anthropology: Twenty Years After', op. cit. p. 88.

(11) This point is well emphasised in the above article by Kahn and Llobera.

(12) Bonte, Pierre 'Marxist Analysis and Social Anthropology: A Review', in Critique of Anthropology, 1979.

(13) Cited in Kahn, J.S. and Llobera, J.R. 'Marxist Anthropology and Segmentary Societies: a review of the literature', in Kahn and Llobera (eds.) The Anthropology of Pre-Capitalist Societies, op. cit.

(14) Cited in Kahn and Llobera, op. cit. See also Mandel, E. The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx, op. cit. pp. 124-125.

(15) See Bonte, P. op. cit. also Terray, E. Marxism and 'Primitive' Societies, 1972, Monthly Review Press, New York.

(16) Rey, P.P. 'The lineage mode of production', in Critique of Anthropology, vol. 3, 1979.

(17) Bonte, P. 'Marxist Analysis and Social Anthropology: a Review Article', op. cit.; 'Marxist

Theory and Anthropological Analysis: The Study of Nomadic Pastoralist Societies', in Kahn and Llobera, op. cit.

(18) Bonte, P. 'Marxist Analysis and Social Anthropology: A Review Article', op. cit.

(19) Bonte, P. 'Marxist Theory and Anthropological Analysis: The Study of Nomadic Pastoralist Societies', op. cit.

(20) Kahn, J.S. and Llobera, J.R. 'Towards a New Marxism or a New Anthropology', op.cit. p. 229.

(21) See work like Cohen, R., Gutkind, P.C.W. and Brazier, P. (eds.) Peasants and Proletarians: The Struggles of Third World Workers, 1979, Monthly Review Press, London; Cohen, R. et al African Labour History, op. cit.; Davidson, B. Africa in History, 1974, Paladin Books, UK; Rodney, W. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa and Davidson, B. The African Past - chronicles from antiquity to modern times, 1964, Longmans, London, among an ever growing collection of enlightened literature available on Africa's past and its achievements.

(22) Cited in Kahn, J.S. 'Marxist Anthropology and Segmentary Societies: a review of the literature', op. cit.

(23) Marx, K. and Engels, F. The German Ideology.

(24) Authors/Writers like Mead, M., Mair, L., Kuper, H., Shapera, I., Gluckman and Fortes come out of a conservative and liberal background which influenced their individual attitudes and interpretations of African societies.

(25) Although there is agreement on the order of the last eight rulers only. See Kuper, H. An African Aristocracy: Rank Among the Swazi, 1969, Oxford University Press, London, Appendix I, p. 232.

(26) See Kuper, H. The Swazi: A South African Kingdom, 1936, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.

(27) Bonner, P.L. Kings, Commoners and Concessionares: the evolution and dissolution of the nineteenth century Swazi state, 1983, Cambridge University Press, London, p. 4.

(28) Literally translated meaning 'those who came before'. See Bonner for historical explanation.

(29) Bonner, P.L. op. cit. p. 88.

(30) Mswati reigned from about 1830 until 1865, and it was during his reign that the structures of accumulation were established and institutionalised. Bonner, P. op. cit. p. 103.

(31) See Bonner, P. op. cit. pp. 85-89 for discussion of the elimination or integration of certain clans and chiefdoms as part of the process of state consolidation.

(32) Bonner, P. op. cit. 'mute' is special herbal concoctions which can be used as a cure, or for poisoning someone, or for 'magical' powers.

(33) Ibid. p. 87.

(34) See Schapera, I. Government and Politics in Tribal Societies, 1956, Watts, London; Balandier, G. Political Anthropology, 1970, Penguin, London: Kuper, H. An African Aristocracy, op. cit.

(35) Incwala is the ceremony of 'the first fruits'.

It is meant to reinforce the political legitimacy of the aristocracy, especially of the monarch, and to emphasise the powers of the rulers. For greater detail, see Kuper, H. op. cit. and Bonner, P.

(36) Bonner, P. op. cit. pp. 90-92.

(37) Ibid. pp. 90-91.

(38) Ibid. p. 92.

(39) Ibid. op. cit.;Kuper H. An African Aristocracy, op. cit. p. 68.

(40) Ibid. op. cit. pp. 80-83. See Trapido, S. 'Aspects in the transition from slavery to serfdom: the South African Republic 1842-1902', 1975, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, (Postgraduate Seminars) London.

(41) Ibid. op. cit.

(42) Kuper, H. An African Aristocracy, op. cit.

(43) Marx, K. and Engels, F. The German Ideology, 1965.

(44) As shown very clearly by the male bias of most literature which is written by male social scientists.

(45) Functions such as being Queen Mother or Queen Regent or, as Induras/Councillors to the rulers.

(46) An effort has been made by scholars like Meillassoux, C. to raise the gender issue as it relates to the position of women in pre-colonial and capitalist Africa, especially in his more recent works i.e. Maidens, Meal and Money, 1981, Cambridge University Press.

(47) Bonner, P. op. cit. p. 105.

(48) Ibid. p. 162.

(49) Ibid. pp. 162-163.

(50) This is a fundamental materialist premise, and increasingly studies on women in third world societies is raising issues central to women as producers and reproducers. For example, see Bay, E.G. (ed.) Women and Work in Africa, 1982, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press; Scott-MacEwen, A. 'Urban Women in LDC's: Examining the "Female Marginalisation"', Thesis, (for publication in the Journal of Development Studies) 1985; Deere, Carmen, D. 'Rural Women's Subsistence Production in the capitalist periphery', in Cohen, R., Gutkind and Brazier, op. cit. and Young, K. and Harris, O. 'Engendered Structures: Some problems in the analysis of reproduction' in Kahn, J.S. and Llobera, J.R. (eds.) The Anthropology of Pre-Capitalist Societies, op. cit.

(51) See work by Bonner, P.; Schapera, I.; and Kuper, H. referred above.

(52) Bonner, P. op.cit.

(53) Kuper, H. The Swazi: A South African Kingdom, op. cit. p. 8.

(54) Schapera, I. Government and Politics in Tribal Societies, 1956, p. 16.

(55) Kuper, H. op. cit. p. 8.

(56) 'The similarities between these environments have led Webb and Daniel to infer that it was competition for these particularly scarce combinations of resources which underlay the growth of the great empires among the northern Nguni in the late eighteenth century. Mounting pressure of population, they suggest, led to

increasing conflict over these areas, which came to a climax during the great droughts and famines at the end of the eighteenth century', P. Bonner, p. 20. This argument is also put forward by historians like Jeff Guy and Hall. See Bonner, op. cit. for references.

(57) Kuper, H. op. cit.

(58) Schapera, I. op. cit. p. 21.

(59) Ibid. pp. 123-126.

(60) Ibid. op. cit.

(61) Women as captives were a form and source of wealth, as prospective mothers of daughters who would also bring wealth to the male householder in the form of lobola, i.e. cattle.

(62) See Kuper, H. op. cit.; Bonner, P. op. cit.; for discussion of myths and legends about the ancestry of the rulers.

(63) Balandier, G. Political Anthropology, op. cit. p. 81.

(64) This notion will be discussed more fully in following chapters.

(65) Mandel, E. Marxist Economic Theory, Vol. I, 1968, Merlin Press, London, p. 29.

(66) Kuper, H. The Swazi: A South African Kingdom, op. cit. pp. 42-43.

(67) Murdoch, G. Soils and Land Capability in Swaziland, 1970, Department of Agriculture, Mbabane, Swaziland.

(68) Ibid. p. 264.

(69) Cited in Murdoch, G. op. cit. (war was an

important expression of the processes underlying state formation - P.M.).

(70) Bantu, Bergdama, Khoi and Saan.

(71) Schapera, I. Government and Politics in Tribal Societies, op. cit. p. 34.

(72) Daryll-Forde, C. Habitat, Economy and Society, 1963, Methuen and Company, London.

(73) Especially as male labour was absent during the planting season - to work in the King's and Chiefs' fields.

(74) Schapera, I. 'The Old Bantu Culture', in Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa, Schapera, I. (ed.) 1967, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, pp. 11-12.

(75) Mandel, E. Marxist Economic Theory, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 34.

(76) According to customary law, Swazi women do not have age of majority rights and are considered perpetual minors whether in or out of marriage. Legally, they cannot enter into contract nor can they initiate an action of divorce. See Armstrong, A. and Nhlapo, R.T. Law and the Other Sex - the legal position of women in Swaziland, 1985, University of Swaziland; also, Nhlapo, R.T. (ed.) Women and the Law, 1983, University of Swaziland.

(77) Maize was introduced into Southern Africa in the mid-nineteenth century, at the same time as the plough, and soon overtook millet as the staple crop.

(78) Except when they were produced by men in the King's gardens.

(79) Before the introduction of ploughs (ox drawn), agriculture was conducted through the use of metal hoes and sticks. See Kuper, H. op. cit. and Schapera, I. op. cit. Also Fage, J.D. A History of Africa, 1978, Hutchinson of London, UK.

(80) The designation of women's work as 'non-work' and as 'inferior' to male occupations forms an essential element of the whole structure of gender exploitation and the unequal division of labour which burdens women with the bulk of reproductive tasks. Literature on this topic is growing at a tremendous rate as women - especially Third World women - write about and express opinions on the issues surrounding reproduction in its social, physical and economic issues. Among the leading works are Nelson, N. (ed.) African Women in Development, Frank Cass, 1981, London; Rogers, B. The Domestication of Women, Tavistock, 1980, London; Young, K. et al Of Marriage and the Market, 1981; and leading journals like Development and Change, to mention only a few.

(81) Daryll-Ford, C. op. cit. pp. 397-398.

(82) Bonte, P. 'Marxist Theory and Anthropological Analysis: The Study of Nomadic Pastoralist Societies', op. cit. See also Rigby, P. 'Olpul and Entoroy: The Economy of Sharing Among the Pastoral Baraguyu of Tanzania', 1978, cited in Bonte, P. op. cit.

(83) Daryll-Forde, C. op. cit. p. 384.

(84) Kuper, H. The Swazi, op. cit. p. 47.

(85) 'The blood of a menstruating woman...is

considered capable of destroying the fertility of cattle and the production of crops, and it may bring illness on men. During menstruation a woman may not walk through a herd, for, it is said, the milk will grow thin, nor may she eat curdled milk lest the future milk yield be tinged with red; should she walk through a garden, the fruit of the earth - monkey nuts, sweet potatoes, ground beans, will wither, and this disaster can only be avoided by special ritual precautions', Kuper, H. The Swazi, op. cit. p. 107 (also see Schapera, I. op. cit).

(86) Ibid. p. 48.

(87) Schapera 'The Old Bantu Culture', op. cit. p. 15. See also Curtin, P. et al African History, 1982, Longman, UK.

(88) See also Nhlapo, R.T. op. cit.; and Armstrong, A. and Nhlapo, R.T. op. cit. for extended discussion on the legal position of women in Swazi society.

(89) Schapera, I. op. cit. pp. 19-20. See also, Lowie, P.H. Primitive Society, 1960, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.

(90) The socialisation of children is also gender defined. Female children spend all their time with their mothers, while male children are socialised into 'manhood' by their fathers and male relations.

(91) UNESCO General History of Africa IV; African History, P. Curtin, S. Feierman, L. Thompson and J. Vansina; A History of Africa, J.D. Page, op. cit.

(92) Walter Rodney; Basil Davidson; P. Bonner.

(93) H. Kuper; I. Schapera; C. Darryl-Forde.

(94) C. Darryl-Forde Habitat, Economy and Society, p. 165.

(95) Ibid. p. 170.

(96) Richard L. Roberts 'Production and Reproduction of Warrior States: Segu Bambara and Segu Tokolor, C. 1712-1890', p. 406.

(97) H. Kuper An African Aristocracy, p. 68.

(98) P. Bonner in his recent work Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires (1983) makes reference to the exchange of children for guns and horses between the Swazi rulers and the Boers in the second half of the nineteenth century. See also Trapido, S. 'Aspects in the transition from slavery to serfdom: the South African Republic 1842-1902', Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, 1975.

(99) H. Kuper An African Aristocracy, p. 68.

(100) Ibid. p. 68.

(101) G. Balandier Political Anthropology, op. cit. pp. 78-79.

(102) The exchange of women for cattle is known as 'Lobola'.

(103) Women have been 'beasts of burden' for centuries, while cattle were considered too sacred and important to carry loads (see R.H. Lowie Primitive Society) and various other anthropologists support this argument.

(104) The 'exclusivist' relationship between women and cattle changed with colonialism, land expropriation and the migration of men to the mines. Women could

no longer be forbidden from touching or herding cattle, since they had to do the ploughing in the absence of men. Although even today, ploughing is a predominantly male task.

(105) H. Kuper An African Aristocracy, p. 149.

(106) Patriarchy is a concept which defines the dominance of male interests and values over women in social, political, economic, cultural and religious terms. It is a Marxist concept which is applied in the anlaysis of pre-capitalist and capitalist social formations, raising issues particularly around the role of women as producers of value and reproducers of labour in both physical and social terms. As a concept it has equal applicability to both pre-capitalist and capitalist societies because it describes unequal gender relations which pertain in either context. For examples of the debates on the relationship between Marxism and Feminism and the relevance of patriarchy as an analytical concept in the clarification of this relationship, see for example, Hartman, H.I. 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: towards a more progressive union', in Capital and Class, Summer 1979, pp. 1-33; V. Beechy 'Some notes on Female Wage Labour in Capitalist Production', in Capital and Class, Autumn 1977, pp. 45-67; Ellenstein, Z. Capitalist patriarchy and the case for socialist feminism, 1979, Monthly Review Press, New York.

(107) Mandel, E. Marxist Economic Theory, Vol. I,

op. cit. pp. 39-40.

(108) Kuper, H. op. cit.

(109) Bonner, P. op. cit.

(110) See case of Sisile referred to earlier on in this chapter.

(111) Kuper, H. The Swazi, op. cit. p. 55.

(112) Meillassoux, C. 'From production to reproduction', in Economy and Society, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1972.

(113) Bonner, P. op. cit. p. 211.

(114) Ibid. p. 211-212.

(115) Ibid. p. 212.

(116) See critique of Meillassoux in Young, K. and Harris, O. 'Engendered Structures: some problems in the analysis of reproduction', op. cit.

(117) Kuper, H. An African Aristocracy, op. cit. p. 130.

(118) Ibid. p. 130.

Chapter Two

The Transition to Colonialism

The history of Swaziland from the mid-1860s until Britain declared that country a 'protectorate' from the South African Republic (SAR)* in 1902, has until recently[1] been glossed over by most historians and political analysts. The main reason for this discrepancy has been the tendency to treat pre-colonial African history as an anthropological subject, and most studies assumed that the most historically relevant starting point of African history is the colonial period.

This assumption has often resulted in an incomplete analysis of existing and past social phenomena, many of which are located within the pre-colonial period, thus undermining very important processes or events which preceded formal colonial domination.

In this chapter, a brief but in-depth analysis of the latter half of the nineteenth century Swazi society will be undertaken, in an attempt to show how the dissolution of the pre-colonial Swazi social structure and the demise of the pre-capitalist state was a consequence of encroaching colonial/capitalist forces. Throughout the preceding discussion of the social structure and class and gender relations in pre-colonial Swazi society, we have not described Swazi society either in terms of the slave or feudal mode of production, but as an emerging class society in which the division of labour and accumulation of wealth is determined by unequal class and gender relations. Several studies of Swazi society in the last century refer to it as a 'feudal mode' or a

'tributary state'. Fransman even goes as far as to describe it as a 'Swazi mode of production'.(2)

While these studies attempt to explain the character of Swazi society in terms of the general Marxist categories of universal historical epochs, this approach tends to be problematic. It is very difficult to explain social phenomena (like lobola) within a conceptual framework which expresses the specificity of European history. The concept of 'feudalism' in particular, within Marxist analysis, has tended to have a very Eurocentric meaning, and to be tied to the historical experience especially of Eastern Europe, and is therefore problematic in its general application, as a concept of mode of production, to most African pre-colonial societies.(3)

In the case of Swaziland, it is very difficult to describe that society in the nineteenth century as either a slave or a feudal society. There is just not sufficient data on Swaziland to show this empirically, and the theorisation of this period in Southern African history is still too young to provide sufficient evidence to argue for either a 'slave' or a 'feudal' mode of production during this period of state formation.(4)

But, one can show that there were certain social and economic phenomena and structures which expressed the forms of slavery and feudalism - i.e. the capture and exploitation of slaves/captives and later their exchange for horses and guns from the Boers,(5) and the payment of tribute in kind or in the form of labour time. But the existence of these forms does not necessarily support the

argument that a particular society (in this case Swazi society) is organised on the basis of a feudal mode or a slave mode of production.(6) The concept of 'Swazi mode of production' is also very problematic, and a critique of its use by Fransman and Levin(7) would be interesting in a different context. What is more important for our purposes is an analysis of the social relations in Swazi society as they affected and expressed class and gender relations, and this analysis can be done without being constrained by the framework of the concept of mode of production. Therefore, the phenomena of captive labour and tribute labour have been discussed within a periodisation of Swazi class and state formation rather than within a 'mode of production' context. This shall continue to be the basis of our analysis of latter nineteenth century Swazi society and of the encroachment and imposition of colonial domination.

We shall now proceed to discuss what could be described as the 'period of primitive accumulation' during which white settlers invaded Swaziland and grabbed all the best land and whatever minerals therein, and show the implications of this process for the Swazi state and for the Swazi people. This period is generally referred to as the Concessions Period - from the late 1870s at the end of Mswati's rule until about 1890 when Mbandzeni died and most of the land had been appropriated several times over by various concessionaires. During those few years, Mbandzeni, the Swazi king after Mswati, is alleged to have 'signed away' most of the country in concessions to a multitude of white settlers. Describing them, De Winton

had this to say in 1890; 'Of these, the mineral and trading represent the capital invested in the country; the grazing the greatest number; the miscellaneous being composed of adventurers, whose object was the obtainment of concessions of every sort and description for the purpose of any profit they might be able to make, by their disposal wherever they could find a purchaser.'(8)

The Signficance of the Concessions Period

The Concessions Period cannot be explained simply as an invasion of white settlers. Rather it must be seen within the wider context of imperialist expansion into Southern Africa and the integration of the region into the international capitalist system. Therefore, the Concessions Period was the specific form which the preliminary process of colonial encroachment assumed in relation to the colonisation of Swaziland, particularly since it occurred in the absence of the military subjugation of the Swazi. In most of Southern Africa, the African peoples fought vigorously against colonial domination, especially the Zulu, the Pedi, the Ndebele and the Basotho. But the Swazi were subjugated through a process of compromise between the Swazi rulers and the advancing colonial forces. Most important for our understanding of the later relationsip between the Swazi ruling class and the colonial state, are the consequences of this initial process of colonisation in undermining the power of the pre-capitalist state.

The demise of the Swazi pre-capitalist state and the establishment of a colonial state structure at the turn of this century, was a consequence of imperialist domination of the region rather than being a result of Mbandzeni's

political and or personal weaknesses. The Swazi state was faced with a fait accompli in the presence of British and Boer domination of South Africa, and the only option the rulers had, besides military resistance which they reckoned they could not muster, was to accept the historical necessity of collaboration. In a situation where they were militarily weaker, and as a class which sought to have a future under colonialism, they decided to compromise and try to get a deal of some sort, mainly for themselves as a class.

Although much of the recent literature on Swaziland attempts to make a class analysis of this period, especially the work by Bonner, Fransman and Mlahagwa, many of these studies are still trapped in a discussion of ruling class politics, and the actions of the rulers to defend their interests become conflated as the history of the Swazi people. Mlahagwa[9] is the only historian I am aware of who makes a deliberate attempt to break out of this cul-de-sac, and his work marks a welcome introduction to the history of the Swazi people, a history which has been overshadowed for too long by the class history of the Dlamini rulers. The above tendency to treat ruling class history as the history of the people adds to the difficulty of trying to reconstruct the social history of any people, and in the case of the Swazi, this is compounded by the fact that the rulers assumed a dominant and prominent role in the outcome of the initial struggles against the imposition of colonial domination.

The Swazi people are silent in most of the historiography of Swaziland, and the latter half of the nineteenth century

is no exception. Certainly, the Swazi people resisted colonial domination - there is no people in history who have quietly submitted to domination and subordination - whether it took the form of early settler encroachment on their lands, or the later form of formal British colonial rule. Collaboration with the white settlers and later with the British colonial state benefited only the rulers. The Swazi people have borne the brunt of that collaboration for the last hundred years, and like any other oppressed and dispossessed class in the region (and in history) they resisted. Later in this chapter we will indicate, in a general way, some of the ways in which the Swazi people tried to resist against the white invaders, albeit in a limited and ineffectual way, because they were unable to stop the process of expropriation.

By the time of the concessions, the pre-capitalist Swazi state had reached a critical point in its reproduction, as a consequence of white encroachment into the territories surrounding Swaziland. The Boers had established the South African Republic in the north and south-west of Swaziland, and the British occupied Natal and were in the process of dispossessing the various peoples of South Africa of their land and the resources it contained. The process of capitalist development in the mining industry in the late 1880s and the development of infrastructure for the movement of commodities within a rapidly changing South Africa - had serious consequences for the reproduction of the Swazi rulers as a class. The presence of the Boers and the British meant the restriction and or removal of former sources of wealth

i.e. cattle, which had been acquired through raids into neighbouring communities. As shown earlier, trade was very limited and occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century, and agriculture provided only a minimal level of subsistence, and even then, only during good years.(10) Therefore, cattle were the main source of class power, and combined with control over military power (the regiments) and labour power (tribute), the Swazi rulers had emerged as a powerful ruling class in the region. In the absence of these sources of wealth, and the continuous border encroachments by the Boers into Swazi territory,(11) the Swazi rulers were caught in the tide of imperialist penetration into the region. Although they often collaborated with the Boers and with the British, attempting to play one side off against the other, in the end the demands of capitalist profit and the laws of capitalist development enveloped them, and they were transformed as a class within the context of a colonial state with an emerging capitalist economy.

Bonner has written an amazingly comprehensive and sophisticated historical analysis of the events preceding the formal colonisation of Swaziland by the British, and of the repeated attempts by the Boers to gain permanent control over that country.(12) His work brings out in great detail the various ways in which the three parties (the British, the Boers and the Swazi rulers) jockeyed for power for several decades, and how the Swazi eventually succumbed to the power of mining and merchant capital, and to settler colonialism. The historical events of this period have also been very well documented by other

historians, but Bonner's work is the most recent and most comprehensive study of this period available. Therefore, there is no need for us to go over the details, except to give a brief analysis of the process through which the Swazi were incorporated into the emerging capitalist system in the region.

As Bonner puts it, 'With the notable exception of the far north (of Swaziland), this was the pattern of the 1860s: growing capitalist penetration; expanding white population; increasingly effective occupation; and an almost imperceptible tilting of the strategic balance against the Swazi.'(13) Mbandzeni was a weak and insecure political leader, and the crisis of leadership within the Swazi ruling class was exacerbated by the encroaching white settler domination. The pressure of colonial forces surrounding the country manifested itself within the ruling class - initially - and later had very serious reproductive consequences for the Swazi people. As the former sources of wealth were increasingly limited by competition with the Boers who were also raiding and subjugating peoples like the Pedi and the Shangaan - often with the collaboration of the Swazi - the Swazi state faced a serious crisis of reproduction. The regiments, which had been the vehicle for extracting cattle and captives from defeated communities assumed the secondary role as contributors of tribute labour. The process of class formation which had been selectively open to ambitious young peasant males through the regiment system, became increasingly insular, closing off the channels of access to wealth and class power. This action had the effect of weakening what Bonner calls the

'tributary state', which Mswati had built up in the first half of the nineteenth century. The concept of 'tributary state' implies that the payment of tribute (in kind or in labour time) was the basis for the accumulation of wealth and power by the rulers. This appears to be Bonner's argument. Our understanding of the process of class and state formation in Swaziland during this period is premised on the argument that cattle, acquired through raids and through the payment of lobola for princesses, were the principal source of wealth in terms of the control over vital resources which provided a power base for the ruling class. In the previous chapter, we showed how this process occurred and the importance of cattle not only in terms of class differentiation, but also in the determination of gender relations and the position of women within the homestead and in the society generally.

The decentralisation of power in the absence of a strong central government which drew the regiments to it meant that 'the centres of political power reverted to the less militarised districts in the middle of the country, and in the absence of booty from battle, it is likely that the regiments were less permanently called up. Political and economic power devolved correspondingly on to the localities and on to the regional chiefs'.[14] This was to be the tendency until the 1880s when the process of land alienation began, which changed the situation of both rulers and peasants in Swaziland.

In an attempt to stop the tide of events, the Swazi collaborated with the British in 1879 to defeat the Pedi, and as with previous occasions, the Swazi rulers hoped to

stave off British and Boer insistence on colonising Swaziland. This was another example of the shameful participation by the Swazi rulers in the destruction and subordination of other Southern African peoples. It did not spare the Swazi from being colonised first by the Boers (1894 - 1898) and after the Anglo-Boer war in 1902, by the British. The Swazi have been described as 'the principal collaborator state in south-eastern Africa',(15) and this is probably a major reason why the Swazi were treated as 'friends' by the British, and were not militarily subjugated, as were the Zulu for example.

The 1880s were dominated by the concessions on the one hand, which precipitated the formal decision by Britain to occupy Swaziland, and also marked the transition of Swazi society into the colonial and capitalist era. Although Mbandzeni actively participated in the initial process of land alienation, it is important not to over-emphasise the role he played in the granting of the concessions, otherwise the class nature and the particular circumstances of his actions are undermined. What is very interesting to note is the battle that raged during this period between Thandile, Sandlane and several other elders, who could be described as 'early nationalists', in that they opposed the granting of concessions, and Mbandzeni and his chief Indvuna Tikhuba, over the resolution of the state crisis. Mbandzeni and his supporters eventually won the day, and after the death of Thandile and Sandlane (the latter was clubbed to death), 'Tikhuba threw in his lot unreservedly with the group of Miller and Thorburn (concessionaires), and

Miller was appointed as the king's secretary early the following year',[16] 1889. Sir Theophilus Shepstone and his son Offy are often described as dishonest opportunists who took advantage of the situation in Swaziland at this time, while posing as friends of the Swazi rulers. Certainly, they became involved in Swazi politics to feather their own nests, but they were no different from all the other white settlers. The Millers and Thorburns also took full advantage of the state crisis - as Bonner has clearly shown,[17] and they too must be tarred with the same brush. They had no more rights to the land and resources of the Swazi people than Offy Shepstone had to the revenues he defrauded Mbandzeni and the Swazi people of.

The experience of the concessions is a clear example of the changes which occurred within the society as a consequence of colonial encroachment. Not only was Swazi society entering a new epoch of social history, but the Swazi ruling class was changing in its character. The element of collective ruling class decision making in terms of wider social interests i.e. the Swazi people, was replaced by the concentration of class power in one individual - the king - in this case Mbandzeni. Previously, all state decisions had been taken as a collective effort by all the elders, but now Mbandzeni did as he pleased.

With the concessions period, the Swazi king assumed greater powers than any other king had had before, and he disposed of the people's birthright in the interests of his own survival as a ruler, and for the survival of the

ruling class. We shall discuss the new character of the Swazi rulers under colonialism and their relationship to the colonial state and capital in the next chapter (chapter 3). As Bonner says, 'However theoretically unconstitutional it may have been, Mbandzeni could grant concessions in defiance of his councillors' wishes, and whatever the consensus arrived at in the Libandla, Mbandzeni could override it by refusing to implement its decisions. Ultimately the only sanction they had was his removal, but since they were reluctant to employ it, the centre of decision making in Swaziland was largely paralysed, and the concession invasion proceeded unchecked'.(18)

It seems that once the process of colonisation - i.e. settler invasion through concession grabbing - had begun, it assumed a momentum which the Swazi rulers were unable to control. The concessionaires arrived without invitation, initially as Boers in search of winter grazing for their sheep, in the temperate northern part of Swaziland, spilling over from the SAR after the discovery of gold in the eastern Transvaal in 1873. By early 1875, they had begun to prospect for gold in the north-western borders of Swaziland, and in spite of the hostility of the Swazi people, they persisted and their numbers increased as did the types of concession.

A striking feature of this period was the constant threat by the Boers that they would incorporate Swaziland into the SAR. Through threats, scheming, intimidation and various other machinations, the Boers had alienated large areas of Swazi territory, which they used every winter

without regard to the Swazi people. Some of these grazing concessions are still in effect presently, held by absentee landlords who reside in South Africa. As Reverend Jackson remarked in his memo to De Winton, in 1889, 'The Boers who come down to graze in the winter are often a very great trouble; during the time they are here they take possession of the country, and the natives (sic) have often to rush in their crops before they are ready, to prevent their being injured or destroyed by the grazers' stock. The Swazi[es] too, are often suspected and punished as if they had stolen what has died or strayed'.(19)

While on the one hand the relationship between the Boers and the Swazi had initially been one of collaboration and co-existence, with trade between them in horses and guns for children and cattle, once the SAR had established itself and capitalist interests began to impinge upon the interests of the Swazi rulers, their relationship changed dramatically. By the 1870s, the Boers had become the enemy of the Swazi, and once the former gained a foothold in Swaziland - as grazers - they began to treat the Swazi people as chattels. They demanded services from the people who lived in those areas of Swaziland over which the Boers had concessionary claims. They even began levying taxes on the people, demanding that they provide unpaid labour for certain periods of the year in the Boer farms within the SAR - as payment for living on their concessions in Swaziland. This issue will be discussed later when we look at the consequences of colonial imposition for the Swazi people. The people of course resisted these demands, and Bonner mentions an incident in 1884 when

'...Mbandzeni's Hhohho indvuna had advised people to resist paying taxes, and at least one person had been killed in the ensuing affray'.(20) Numerous border clashes were reported over the theft of cattle by the Boers, who wanted the cattle as a basis of wealth upon which they could establish themselves as a ruling class, especially since British capital had a monopoly over the mining of gold and diamonds, and over the commercial sector as well, within Swaziland and South Africa. Just as the Swazi rulers had established themselves as a power in south-eastern Africa a few decades before by alienating the cattle and labour (women and children) of neighbouring African communities, so the Boers sought to use that same process to establish themselves and dominate the Swazi and other African peoples in the region. The seizure of cattle by the Boers, who had superior weapons i.e. guns, meant a further weakening of the position and legitimacy of the Swazi rulers. 'Nor was that all...for cattle, besides meaning wealth, also underpinned political authority, and this again was being cut away by the levying of taxation.'(21)

By the time of Mbandzeni's death in October, 1889, the new class alliances had begun to coalesce, with the more opportunistic elements among the chiefs, like Tukhuba, allying themselves with the influential concessionaires, especially the representatives of British commercial and mining capital. While the early nationalists in the Libandla tried desparately to salvage some of their former authority. 'The latent tensions in Swazi society gradually heightened as the

1880s wore on...Rival factions of concessionaires grouped themselves round rival factions in the council who were anxious to elevate themselves into powerful brokering roles. An anarchic situation soon developed...in which factions of concessionaires and councillors gradually eroded the authority of Mbandzeni and the central organs of state...It was in this period that the notorious revenue, customs and unalloted lands concessions were granted which ended up in the pockets of agents of the SAR.'(22)

This period of 'chaos' culminated in Britain's decision to assess the possibilities of imposing formal colonial domination over Swaziland. Although some historians and analysts imply that the Swazi brought colonialism upon themselves by getting into the mess which characterised the country at the end of the 1880s, the situation was not due to the actions of the Swazi alone. The Swazi rulers were merely trying to respond to circumstances which were being imposed upon them by the colonisers, and it is academic and political dishonesty to blame the Swazi rulers and the Swazi people for British colonisation of their country. The concessionaires, together with the pressure from the Boers who wanted to colonise Swaziland and use it as a route to the sea (through Delgoa Bay), cleared the way for a formal declaration by Britain that Swaziland had become an area of importance to British interests. Although British capital was only trickling into Swaziland,(23) compared to the huge investments which were being made in the gold and diamond industries in South Africa, pressure from

existing mining and commercial capital in Swaziland made a political decision by Britain imperative. Britain was the most powerful force in the region, and it used this leverage to initiate the process of formal domination, in the absence of Boer decisiveness about incorporating Swaziland into the SAR. With the death of Mbandzeni at the end of 1889, '...the British government yielded to the vigorous representations made from the Chamber of Commerce in England and by some of the companies concerned...'(24) in mining especially in Swaziland.

In the letter of appointment as Commissioner to Swaziland from the Colonial Office in September, 1889, De Winton was advised that; 'It is in order to determine what course is most desirable in relation to Swaziland, having regard to the interests of the natives (sic) and of the white residents, that Her Majesty's government has decided to appoint a British Commissioner who, acting in concert with a Commissioner from the SAR, should visit the country at an early date and ascertain, after careful inquiry on the spot, what settlement of that territory may be best conducive to the advancement of the various interests commanding consideration.'(25)

Throughought the decades preceding this decision, the British and the Boers had competed over the colonisation of Southern Africa, but they had not been irreconcilable enemies. They both represented colonial capital in different forms from different European interests, but in the final analysis they collaborated in the dispossession and domination of the peoples of Southern Africa.(26) This collaborationist relationship is brought

out very clearly in the instructions which De Winton received from the Colonial Office vis-a-vis the SAR;

'In your discussions with the Commissioner of the SAR, and in any recommendations which you may make, you are at liberty to take into consideration the relations of the affairs of Swazi[e]land to the interests of South Africa generally, bearing in mind Her Majesty's government's desire to arrive at a satisfactory and enduring understanding with the SAR in regard to all the tribes and countries bordering thereon, and that it is an essential feature of our policy that there should be no undue restrictions upon the advancement or development of British trade and enterprise in any part of South Africa.'(27) (my emphasis - P.M.).

By the time De Winton went out to assess the situation in south-eastern Africa, discussions between the SAR and the British Colonial government on the partitioning of Southern Africa had already been concluded, as is shown by this statement from the letter to De Winton. 'The latter government (SAR), while renewing its assurances that it does not desire to interfere with the independence of Swazi[e]land, has declared that it is not able to acquiesce in the extension of British sovereignty over that country, and has proposed, as a friendly settlement, to withdraw all its claims to the lands north of the Republic, and to use its influence to support British expansion in Bechuanaland and Matabeleland, if Her Majesty's government will withdraw itself to the east of the Republic in Swaziland and Tongaland.'(28) (my emphasis - P.M.).

De Winton, together with a Boer Commissioner, spent several months in Swaziland, assessing the political and economic interests of British capital and of the colonial state. He met representatives of mining and commercial capital, who made it very clear that large sums of money - approximately three million pounds - had been invested in the country, and they demanded British intervention in the confirmation of those interests and protection from the SAR. They also demanded that, in case of SAR control over Swaziland, 'That no oppressive taxation on the white population in Swazi[e]land shall be imposed by that government' and 'That all whites in the country shall have a franchise in matters appertaining to Swazi[e]land affairs.'(29)

The question of SAR annexation, which the white settlers were strongly against, was very persistently rejected in all the memoranda presented to De Winton. The Boers had 'bought' the railway, postal, telegraph and revenue concessions, and the British settlers felt threatened by overall Boer control over Swaziland. 'Your memorialists are therefore of the opinion that the annexation of Swazi[e]land to the SAR; or the introduction of the general systems, principles and circumstances obtaining in that Republic, could not fail to act detrimentally on the pursuit and progress of the mining, commercial and general industries in Swazi[e]land, and on the welfare and safety of the native (sic) population.'(30) The 'welfare and safety of the native population' was not of any real concern to the white settlers, who saw the Swazi people merely in terms

of cheap labour on the farms and in the mines.

De Winton also met with some of the Swazi rulers, whom he treated with typical colonial superiority, telling them that 'You are our friends, and if I may so put it, our children; and a father never hurts his child'.(31) This patronising attitude was merely a disguise for his racism, which he expressed very clearly in this statement about the Swazi. 'They are lazy, dirty and untruthful... taking them as a whole, they are happy, contented, work-hating, wild people, but they are not such a particularly interesting race as some have endeavoured to describe them, and unless kept in order with a firm but just hand would be continually giving trouble.'(32) This indirect acknowledgement of the people's resistance is one of many scattered references to the Swazi people's rejection of colonialism which refute the claim that the Swazi gave in 'peacefully' to colonial domination.(33) The only acceptable 'native' was Mbandzeni, who was described by De Winton as 'a good, kind and gentle king'. We know why he was so praised - because he gave away to the white settlers the birthright of the Swazi people - their land.

De Winton's visit had very important consequences for the future of Swaziland, and laid out the basis for the implementation of colonial state structures, as well as providing the basis for the ratification, by Britain and the SAR, of the concessions and the partition of the country during the first decade of the twentieth century.

The 1890, 1893 and 1894 Conventions - which were essentially discussions between Britain and the SAR on

how best their interests could be secured and encouraged, with the minimum of conflict between them, resulted in the following;

- most of the concessions claimed by the white settlers were confirmed by a court of three South African judges in 1890 - 1891, and in 1905 were ratified by the Swaziland Concessions Committee as valid.
- the rights and privileges of the white settlers were safeguarded.
- 'The Joint Government Committee had jurisdiction in matters where whites only were concerned and the sovereign rights of the Swazis were strictly reserved'.(34)
- Swaziland was to be jointly administered by both the British and the Boers, beginning with SAR rule in 1894.
- The Swazi people were reduced to the status of cheap labourers on the mines and farms, without any rights of franchise, nor property, nor political decision-making.

The so-called 'Swazi Independence', supposedly guaranteed by the conventions, was therefore a farce, to disguise the real processes which were taking hold of Swazi society, and to serve as a transition from pre-capitalism to colonialism.

From the very onset, however, De Winton was aware of the resistance which would follow the implementation of the conventions. As he put it, 'whichever Government assumes the control of the white population, great care

will have to be exercised in dealing with the natives (sic) at the onset. They would have to be gradually absorbed, and thus in the process of time eventually come under white control". (35)

Early Resistance to Colonialism

The resistance by the Swazi people to colonialism is often assumed not to have been expressed, because as stated earlier, the reports and literature is almost silent on this aspect of Swazi social history. The reasons for this 'silence' have been mentioned, but now and then one comes across incidents which, if seen in the context of people's resistance, show clearly, albeit in a limited way, that the Swazi people did reject colonialism and settler alienation of their lands. The resistance took various forms, and the earliest and most direct form was against the Boer demands for unpaid labour which was noted above. The refusal to provide unpaid labour probably underpinned the destruction of the people's crops and the theft of their cattle by the Boers. The imposition of taxation, initially in those areas under Boer control - i.e. grazing concessions - resulted in organised resistance led by the local chiefs whose people were affected, especially in the north of the country where most of the grazing concessions were.

After 1894, when Swaziland became a 'protected dependency' of the SAR, repression against the Swazi people was intensified, mainly through heavy taxation especially the notorious hut tax. 'Every adult male had to pay 10s per hut, in addition to a 2s 6d road tax. Moreover, Swazis living in white farms but not working for their landlords had to pay an additional £2 tax.' (36) The white settlers

were untaxed, as guaranteed by the 1894 convention. The objective of the tax was twofold - to provide much needed labour in the mines and farms of South Africa and, to raise revenues for the SAR. As will be shown later, British capital presented such effective competition for labour in the mines, that the SAR had to resort to overt political manipulation to supply Boer owned mines and farms with African labour.

Although labour had already begun to move into local (Swaziland) mines and into commercial businesses,(37) the taxation imposed by the Boers was aimed at intensifying the movement of labour out of subsistence production in order to satisfy the competition for cheap African labour by both the Boers and the British. The hut tax and all the other taxes which were subsequently imposed upon the Swazi people, were levied against able-bodied men, between the ages of 18 - 45, who could work in the mines, on the railways and in construction. The gender bias of the taxation system had important consequences for the character of the emerging working class, and for the reproduction of labour through unpaid women's work in the subsistence sector. This will be discussed fully in the next chapter.

In terms of the people's reaction, the imposition of the tax led to one of the most serious incidents of resistance in Swazi history. Although this event has often been portrayed as an example of how 'savage' and 'uncivilised' the Swazi were, especially their kings,(38) and even Fransman misses the political significance of the event as far as popular resistance to colonialism is

concerned by describing it mainly in terms of intra-ruling class plots and conflicts.[39] The importance of the fact that Bhunu, the young Swazi king who had succeeded Mbandzeni, had organised the army in an attempt to lead a rebellion against the collection of the tax, and the fact that the people showed their discontent by burning and looting white businesses and white homes, killing some of the settlers, these important facts are overshadowed by Fransman's preoccupation with intra-ruling class struggles.

The Bhunu Rebellion, as it should really be called, was an important milestone in the history of colonial resistance by the Swazi people. It was the first time since the white settlers had occupied that country that the people openly expressed their rejection of colonial domination. After this incident, which ended in Bhunu's flight to Natal where he sought the protection of the British, the resistance to taxation and repression assumed more covert forms which we will discuss later in further detail in chapter three which will deal with the first fifty years of formal colonial rule in Swaziland. Although judicial powers to try serious criminal cases was abrogated henceforth by the SAR, and later by the British colonial state, the loss of juridical control was an inevitable consequence of colonial domination and the imposition of a new and different economic, political, legal and religious system - the capitalist system. In 1898 the Anglo-Boer war erupted over the resources and labour power of the South African peoples. When the Boers were finally 'defeated'[40] and the dust had settled, the construction of a colonial state and the implementation of capitalist land

and labour policies could begin in earnest throughout Southern Africa - including Swaziland.

Conclusion

The concessions period was thus a preparation for the development of commodity relations in Swaziland and the transformation of the Swazi people into wage workers. This process was clearly spelt out by De Winton when he said; 'It is a time-honoured maxim and one often quoted, that "trade follows the flag"...and there appears to me no reason why the commerce and trade of Swazi[e]land should not remain in the hands of British subjects, whatever may be the future of Swazi[e]land.'(41) In the case of SAR control, the suggestion was that the interests of the British had to be safeguarded at all costs. '...and that Her Majesty's Government will use her good offices towards the promotion and increase of the influence of the Transvaal in Swazi[e]land on the distinct understanding that all residents (i.e. whites - P.M.) in Swazi[e]land are accorded equal rights of franchise and citizenship; and that all mineral rights representing large amounts of English capital, and all vested interests, shall be respected in their present integrity.'(42) For the Swazi people, the words of the Reverend Jackson captured most succinctly the reality of their situation: 'They have parted with so many rights that there is little left for themselves; gold, iron, tin, copper and coal, will probably be found in large quantities; they are awaiting the capitalist and the miner.'(43)

Notes

* The SAR was the first 'independent' state declared by the Boer settlers in south-eastern Africa in the mid-nineteenth century.

(1) In the recent past - 1970s and early 1980s - several doctoral theses and articles have been written, and a few books published on this period of Swazi history. For example, see Mashasha, E.J. A History of Swaziland, 1875-1926: the Swazi Response to the Imposition of Afrikaner and British Rule, Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford University, 1977; Mlahagwa, J. 'Capital, Class and State in Colonial Swaziland', (unpublished) 1982; Mlahagura, J. 'Capital, Class and State in Colonial Swaziland: Capital Articulation and the Demise of the Swazi State', presented at Conference on Research in progress in Southern Africa, York University, March 1984; Fransman, M. The State and Development in Swaziland 1960-1977, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sussex, 1978; Bonner, P.L. Kings, Commoners and Concessionnaires, Cambridge University Press, London, 1983; Bonner, P.L. The rise, consolidation and disintegration of Dlamini power in Swaziland 1820-1884, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1977.

(2) Fransman, M. op. cit.

(3) The concept of feudalism in Africa is used more to describe relations of bondage which characterised social relations in societies like Mali, Upper Volta, Ethiopia, and other social formations which experienced the emergence of great feudal kingdoms,

among which Zimbabwe in Southern Africa featured. Historians like B. Davidson and W. Rodney have discussed the character of feudal relations in pre-colonial African societies more in historical terms rather than in terms of the analytical specificity of the concept. E. Mandel gives a very useful explanation of what could be called a 'generalised feudal form' in Africa when he says; 'It can indeed be considered proven that in every case we find first of all a voluntary tribute paid by the communities to meet the costs of tasks of common interest (even if this be an imaginery interest, religions or magical in nature), that to an increasing extent a tribal, or inter-tribal aristocracy takes over first the usufruct and then the ownership of this tribute; and that for a more or less prolonged intermediate period a 'democracy at the grass roots' based on the village community, co-exists with a government of an increasingly 'despotic' type at the top, which is an expression of the new ruling class' - The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx, New Left Books, London, 1971, pp. 125-126.

(4) Maybe with the exception of the Zulu and the Basotho, but even in these cases, the specificity of their historical experiences would require an expansion of the concept of 'feudal mode of production'.

(5) The level of trade between the Swazi and the settlers in the SAR and with the Portuguese, was not very much, and did not affect in any major way

the character of Swazi society nor of its people. The Swazi did not become an important trading nation as did some of the West African societies. Neither did trade become the source of large-scale accumulation and thereby the power base of the Swazi rulers. (See Trapido, S. and Bonner, P. for references on child slavery and trade in horses and guns by the Swazi.)

(6) Although there was a period recently when the concept of mode of production received intense attention and was very popular in social science analysis, it is still very problematic in terms of relating conceptual categories to existing social realities, especially where there is limited empirical data and no pre-colonial written language. See Hindess, B. and Hirst, P.Q. Precapitalist modes of production, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975; Wolpe, H. 'Draft notes on (a) articulation of modes of production and the value of labour power, (b) periodisation and the state', Sussex University Seminar paper, 1975, among others on the subject.

(7) Fransman, M. op. cit.; Levin, R. 'Traditional Rulers or Bourgeoisie? Class and Ideology in Swaziland', Working Paper No. 8, University of Liverpool, 1984.

(8) De Winton, Sir Francis, Report on Swazieland, 1890, HMSO p. 11.

(9) Mlahagwa, J. 'Capital, Class and State in Colonial Swaziland: Capital articulation and the demise of the Swazi state', op. cit.

(10) The peoples of Southern Africa have suffered from persistent cyclical droughts, which have occurred every other decade, and the cycles have become shorter and the droughts more severe as the people have had less and poorer land to subsist upon over the last century.

(11) The Boers had managed to expropriate vast areas of land from what was then Swazi territory through threats and intimidation. 'The Swazi ceded vast tracts of territory to Chrigstad and Lydenburg in 1846 and 1855 which were confirmed in 1860, 1866, and 1875'; Bonner, P. Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires, p. 217.

(12) Bonner, P. op. cit.

(13) Ibid. p. 112.

(14) Ibid. p. 129.

(15) Ibid. p. 155.

(16) Ibid. p. 193.

(17) See Chapter Ten of Bonner, P. Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires, op. cit.

(18) Ibid. p. 174.

(19) Memo from Reverend Jackson, in De Winton Report, 1890, p. 21.

(20) Bonner, P. op. cit. p. 177, see also Baker, D. Swaziland, HMSO, London, 1965.

(21) Ibid. p. 178.

(22) Ibid. p. 213.

(23) Approximately £3 million had been invested in Swaziland by 1890.

(24) Hailey, Lord, Native Administration in African

Territories, 1954, (microfilm), p. 365.

(25) De Winton Report, Letter from R.G.W. Herbert, Colonial Office, 26th September, 1889, p. 4.

(26) See Simons, J. and Simons, R. Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950, International Defence and Aid Fund, 1983. Also, Benson, M. The Struggle for a Birthright, Penguin African Library, 1966.

(27) De Winton Report, Letter from R.G.W. Herbert, op. city. p. 4.

(28) Ibid. p. 4.

(29) De Winton Report - from white settlers, p. 50.

(30) De Winton Report, op. cit. p. 88.

(31) Ibid. p. 34.

(32) Ibid. p. 8.

(33) There has been a tendency to label the Swazi as 'peaceful' in the sense of having capitulated without a fight, to colonialism, and literature like H. Kuper's work and Marwick, Baker and other anthropologists who emphasise the 'harmony of interests' between the colonisers and the Swazi aristocracy, only tends to emphasise this misrepresentation of the history of the Swazi people.

(34) Captain Penfold 'Native Land Rights in Africa; importance of the Swazi land appeal'. (Special to 'The African World'), supplement to The African World, May, 29, 1926.

(35) De Winton Report, op. cit. p. 13.

(36) Mlahagwa, J. op. cit. p. 8.

(37) See chapters three, four and five for discussion of the development of commodity production

and commodity relations in Swaziland, especially in agriculture.

(38) For a brief description of the assassination of Mbhabha Sibandze, see Fransman, M. op. cit. p. 55.

(39) Fransman, M. op. cit. p. 55.

(40) The Boers came out of the war (1898-1902) chastised but not beaten - and the 1910 Act of Union ensured them a privileged position in the future South African state as an integral part of the ruling class in collaboration with British imperialism. That collaborationist relationship remains to the present (1986).

(41) De Winton Report, op. cit. p. 9.

(42) Ibid. p. 9.

(43) The Reverend Jackson in De Winton Report, p. 20.

Chapter Three

The Land Question and the Development of Commodity Relations in Swaziland

The Formalisation of Colonisation

'The capitalist system pre-supposes the complete separation of the labourers from all property in the means by which they can realise their labour.... As soon as capitalist production is once on its own legs, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a continually extending scale. The process, therefore, that clears the way for the capitalist system, can be none other than the process which takes away from the labourer the possession of his means of production; a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social means of subsistence and of production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage-labourers. The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as primitive, because it forms the pre-historic stage of capital and of the mode of production corresponding with it.'(1)

The formalisation of colonial domination by Britain over the Swazi people in 1902 - with the end of the Anglo-Boer War - marked the final phase of the process of 'primitive accumulation', and established the legal and political context within which commodity production could develop. Between 1902 - 1914, a series of Orders and Proclamations were promulgated which set the seal on white settler claims to land and minerals, and provided capital with the basic guarantees to proceed with the exploitation

of the Swazi people and the expropriation of their resources - the most important of which was their labour power. On the 25th June, 1903, the Swaziland Order in Council was passed by the British Parliament. 'This Order, which was issued by virtue of the powers conferred by the Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1890, constituted the basic authority under which the administration of the country has since been conducted by His Majesty's Government....that all the rights and powers of the (South African) Republic in respect of Swaziland had passed to the British Crown by virtue of the conquest of the Transvaal by His Majesty's forces and its subsequent annexation.'(2) 'The Swaziland Administration Proclamation, No. 3 of 1904, as amended by Proclamation No. 4 of 1907.... applied the laws of the Transvaal to Swaziland, and laid down that the country should be administered as a district of the Transvaal.'(3) It further completed the partition of Swaziland which was ratified in the Partition Proclamation of 1907 - 1909. This latter proclamation was based on premises similar to those underlying the notorious Glen Grey Act (South Africa) of 1894,(4) which aimed at creating reserves within which cheap Black labour would be reproduced and forced Africans into wage labour. Mashasha suggests that: 'The real explanation for the adoption of land apportionment in Swaziland is that it dovetailed neatly into the (colonial) government's plan to establish a white colony in Swaziland of largely owner-occupiers, preferably British, on small to medium size allotments. There can be no doubt that the future settlement and colonisation of Swaziland by a thriving white community whose ultimate political and economic interests would lie in the coming

'Union of South Africa' constituted the real basic factor that led to the policy of land partition, and not the protection of native rights to land....'[5] Mashasha further argues that, 'to sweeten the bitter pill of land apportionment for the Swazi, the Proclamation allowed a five years' period of grace from July 1909; no Swazi actually resident on private or crown land when the partition was completed could be compelled to leave before July 1914'.[6] The implication of this 'concession' in providing white settler farmers (in Swaziland) with tenant/squatter labour on the one hand, and the demands for labour by the mining industry locally and in South Africa on the other, will be discussed below.

By the end of 1907, George Grey, who had been appointed as a special commissioner to demarcate those areas which would become the reserves for the Swazi people - thirty five pieces in all, scattered around the country, adjacent to white farms - and which amounted to approximately one-third of the total land surface of the country, had completed his odious task. Using the Glen Grey Act as his basic criterion, Grey (George) argued that the land made available to Swazi peasant families was capable of reproducing 'a group of seven natives'; i.e. it was sufficient for agricultural production and the grazing of stock. Most of the literature on this issue shows very clearly that the land allocated to the Swazi peasantry was not only inadequate in terms of space, but it was also the poorest and least valued land in the country. Grey's arguments that he had adequately provided for the existing and future Swazi population was merely an excuse toclaim

that the Swazi had received 'a fair share' of the country.(7) The situation in the reserves a mere 10 - 15 years later exposed the reality of what land apportionment really meant for the reproduction of the Swazi peasantry and the emergent proletariat. As George Grey put it 'I have given especial consideration to the wishes of all Concessionaires occupying their land; I have visited every resident owner or held meetings in the neighbourhood which all residents were invited to attend. In almost every instance, I believe, I have framed partition to suit the view of resident Concessionaires and have been able to avoid including their homesteads or any land they cultivate in the native area'.(8)

The real objective underlying the land partition exercise was to deprive the Swazi peasantry of adequate means of reproduction and thereby force labour (initially male labour) out of subsistence production and into wage employment. The mechanisms of labour extraction will be discussed more fully later in this chapter. What is very clear from the numerous statements made by several colonial officers,(9) in particular characters like Lord Milner, High Commissioner to South Africa, George Grey, and Allister Miller - Director of the Swazieland Corporation, the biggest commercial company in the country at the turn of the century,(10) who was an uncompromising racist - is that they all understood very clearly the basic capitalist demand for cheap labour. These representatives of the colonial state came from a system whose express aim in colonising Africa was to make as high profits as were possible, and they knew that until they could move labour

out of subsistence production and into commodity production in the mines, on the railways and on to the white farms, the wheels of capital could not begin to roll. Allister Miller in particular, after whom the main street of Mbabane, the capital of Swaziland ironically is named, was one of the most outspoken and least apologetic of capital's representatives. He made no bones about the importance of 'detribalising the natives' in the interests of white settler capital.(11)

Therefore, from 1909 onwards, territorial segregation, which not only provided tenant labour for the white settler farmers, but also led to the creation of over-populated reserves from which emerging capitalist enterprises in the country and in South Africa could draw abundant cheap labour, became the corner-stone of the labour policy in Swaziland. 'In the history of primitive accumulation, all revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capitalist class in the course of formation: but, above all, those moments when great masses of men (and women - P.M.) are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled as free and 'unattached' proletarians on the labour market. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process. The history of this expropriation, in different countries, assumes different aspects and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession and at different periods.'(12)

How did the Swazi respond to the ongoing process of dispossession which intensified during the first decade of the twentieth century, leaving increasing numbers of

peasants dependent on white settlers for land as 'squatters', or transforming them almost overnight into migrants working for a pittance in the mines of Swaziland and South Africa. Once again, the bulk of the literature tends to emphasise the response of the Swazi ruling class, presenting the Queen Mother (and the recently deceased Sobhuza II) and the chiefs as the main force of resistance against the land alienation.[13] While it is important to show how the Swazi rulers attempted to salvage the situation, the manner in which this was done and the reasons underlying their challenge of the land partition, differed fundamentally from those of the mass of the peasantry. In all African societies which were colonised, the relationship between the coloniser and the indigenous ruling class differed. Some ruling classes were uncompromising in their rejection of colonial domination and they were eventually eliminated as a class, as happened in several cases in Southern Africa; or, various agreements were reached between the parties during the course of colonisation, which tended to favour the colonisers more but which catered for the interests of the indigenous ruling class, however minimally.

The relationship between the coloniser and the producing classes in these societies also varied from country to country, although the basic contradiction between oppressor and oppressed underlay all situations, and, with the development of commodity production, the contradiction between labour and capital became increasingly the most important characteristic of African social formations. Therefore it is necessary to

examine the responses of both classes (Swazi rulers and the peasantry) to land partition, in the light of their respective class positions and their differing relationships to the coloniser.

In the case of Swaziland, the colonial state had developed a relationship of 'negotiation' with the Swazi ruling class on most issues, but on the matter of the land partition, the latter were merely informed of the task which George Grey had been given by the High Commissioner, Lord Milner (on the recommendations of Allister Miller), and there was very little which the Swazi rulers could do to stop the implementation of those decisions.

Mashasha writes that Grey 'was met with a general refusal on the part ofthe chiefs to give any information, on the grounds that they had received no instructions from the Queens Regent to do so'. And, that the Queen Regent and the chiefs argued that 'We know the Partition Commissioner is at work....but we are not in it....We only think it is being done because we are a different race. The land is ours.'(14)

This rather impotent attitude sums up what might be described as an expression of nationalism on the part of the rulers, who were beginning to react to colonialism as it manifested itself in political, economic and racial terms. But the expression of nationalist sentiments did not imply or signify a rejection of all forms of colonialism, since the Swazi rulers continued to see the British as their friends, especially in relation to the Boers. Therefore, the Swazi rulers were surprised at the

arrogance and ruthlessness of the British, especially in relation to the land partition, and although they were now losing even their limited economic and political control over the peasants - especially those peasants who would be living on white farms and migrants in the mines - still, the Swazi rulers did not reject colonialism.(15)

Instead, they preferred to discuss and negotiate with the various colonial representatives, and for almost three decades they held 'consultations' and sent deputations within Swaziland and even to Britain. 'During the early phases of capital penetration, the pre-capitalist ruling alliance entered a period of crisis. Expropriation of Swazi land meant an erosion of their basis of power, and it is in this light that their deputations and protestations to the British Colonial Authorities must be seen.'(16) In a letter to the Resident Commissioner Lord Gladstone, dated 19th August, 1913, the Queen Regent argued that '....the present area (of approximately 1,638,000 acres) should be increased by at the very least one half more than their present size, in order to meet the minimum requirements of our people today'.(17) The Swazi population had been estimated at around 105,759 in 1911, and the white settlers, who held 1,537,000 acres of the best land, were estimated to number only 1,083.(18) But Gladstone arrogantly retorted that 'Natives do not grow rich and great merely by occupying much land....but by making the best use of the land they have got. Swaziland is a small country in area, and there is therefore all the more need for you to learn how to get from the land much more than you do'.(19) The white settlers, of course, could

have as much as they wished of this small country.

When Sobhuza II assumed the role of king a few years later, he took up the land issue and pursued the same policy of negotiation - but with no results. Until, in 1926 when the last of many appeals was dismissed by the Privy Council and the matter was regarded as closed by the British. Sobhuza expressed his frustrations at the uncompromising stand the British had taken throughout this period in very clear nationalist terms. He argued that the colonial government had 'turned a deaf ear' to the grievances of the Swazi people, and reserved all the best land for the white settlers '....while the Swazi are being exposed to slow starvation and impoverishment in their country, so that they may be forced to work as servants for the white people'.[20] So finally the penny had dropped, and the rationale of colonial domination became very clear to the Swazi rulers. Unfortunately, probably because of both historical compromise and class interests on their part, the rulers did not change their relationship with the colonial state - at least not in favour of the Swazi people. Instead, they found ways of consolidating their class position and class interests within the new social circumstances, mainly by collaborating with capital in the extraction and control of cheap migrant labour. This collaborationist relationship has continued even to the present day.

At this point of our discussion, it is important to point out and to clarify that as from 1902 onwards, the Swazi rulers cannot be described as 'rulers' in the same way as they had been when they had control over the Swazi

people and the land, prior to the formalisation of colonial domination. Although by the end of the last century they had lost most of their economic, political and legal power, and the pre-colonial state had been totally undermined as a viable phenomenon vis-a-vis the British state, it was the land partitioning which finally marked the total demise to the pre-capitalist state and the rise, on the other hand, of the colonial state and all its structures. Therefore, in terms of our discussion of the Swazi rulers, it is more conceptually and empirically correct to refer to them as an 'aristocracy' henceforth, a class which has nominal power/influence mainly ideological persuasion, and whose legitimacy and survival was largely dependent upon the colonial state and upon the role which the coloniser envisaged the Swazi 'rulers' were to play in the development of capitalism in Swaziland (and in South Africa).

This is not to say that the class struggle between the Swazi 'rulers' and the colonial bourgeoisie ceased to exist, because, on the contrary, the history of the next fifty years tells quite a different story. But the rise of the capitalist mode of production to a dominant position within Swazi society and the development of a colonial/capitalist state with all the structures and mechanisms which accompany it, meant that, until the 1950s when a petty-bourgeois class had emerged which has an historically specific relationship with capital, the Swazi 'rulers' played the role of political and social intermediaries between capital and the colonial state, and

labour (migrant workers and the peasants). In this way, they were able to survive and be transformed as a privileged class, from whose ranks the vast majority of petty-bourgeois elements emerged.

The peculiar and specific relationship which the Swazi 'rulers' developed with the colonial state and capital - in terms of power sharing and access to the surplus generated by commodity production over the last eighty years, has been more thoroughly analysed by M. Fransman; A. Booth; and more recently, by R. Levin. Although their general thesis is that the Swazi 'rulers' retained a certain 'autonomy' and therefore have had considerable power over the Swazi people up to date, this is a false picture which is generated by an emphasis on ruling class politics and by the tendency to under-emphasise the crucial importance of proletarian struggles which are the main determinant of the social history of the country (Swaziland) and of the region as a whole. If one emphasises the ideological role which the Swazi 'rulers' have played in the exploitation and oppression of the producing class in Swaziland, and gives this ideological function similar importance as the control over production and the surplus therein produced, then one is bound to slip into the argument that the Swazi 'rulers' have remained a ruling class, in spite of the concrete evidence which shows very clearly how finance capital, in the control of the imperialist and South African (white) bourgeoisie have maintained total economic control over the Swazi economy and the labour-power of the producers of surplus value over the last century (since the 1880s).

But we shall not engage any further in this debate at this stage. Suffice to say that we agree with the position adopted by Mlahagwa when he says that 'ever since the era of the concessions, the Swazi aristocracy increasingly came to perform an ideological role at one level, and, at another level, became the unconscious intermediary between the forces of capitalism on the one hand and the Swazi masses on the other. Needless to say both roles were performed in the service of capital in its forms and manifestations, although at the same time the Swazi aristocracy thought they were advancing their own interests.'(21) With one important qualification - that in the performance of their role as a collaborationist class with capital and the colonial state, the Swazi aristocracy deliberately furthered its own interests, and therefore was a conscious intermediary in the process of oppression and exploitation of the Swazi people - a role it has continued to play very consciously today in relation to South Africa in particular, even as the forces of change gather momentum and threaten to overwhelm and shatter their false image as 'custodians of the Swazi nation'.

The manner in which the Swazi aristocracy collaborated with the colonial state and thereby ensured its own survival as an ally of capital within the Swazi social formation, will be discussed presently. We shall focus upon their role as 'recruiters' of labour first for the mines, and later for commodity agriculture. In this way, it will become clear that they ceased to rule as a class with state power, but that their role as social controllers

of labour has been crucial in their survival as a privileged class in the age of monopoly capitalism.

The Commoditisation of Land and Labour

'By commodity production is meant an organisation of social economy in which goods are produced by separate, isolated producers, each specialising in the making of some one product, so that to satisfy the needs of society it is necessary to buy and sell products (which, therefore, become commodities) in the market.'(22)

The process of commoditisation of land and labour in Swaziland was a consequence of the development of capitalism, initially within South Africa, which soon extended into the region as a whole. The expropriation of land, as argued above, was a necessary condition for the initial establishment of capitalist relations of production - not necessarily in the development of commodity agriculture, which only developed in the first half of the twentieth century - but more importantly for the provision of abundant and cheap Black labour for the mining industry. Therein lay the foundations of capitalist profit in Southern Africa, and the availability of abundant and very cheap labour, unskilled and unprotected by a history of struggle as was the case with the white labour force brought in from Europe, was the oil upon which the wheels of capital depended for their motion.

In the age of imperialism, monopoly capital which is controlled and directed by a European bourgeoisie could be invested in the production of commodities in the colonies (especially in mining) without the existence of a fully-fledged colonial/capitalist state. Monopoly capital,

often preceded by the bourgeois army and the Christian church, carried with it the authority and backing of the capitalist state, and, until it became necessary to establish the structures of a colonial state, a process which inevitably followed the penetration of capital into any social formation, until then, capital could begin the process of commoditisation with only the barest political and administrative structures available.[23] Often, the collaboration and assistance of the indigenous ruling class was essential in this initial phase.

It is only when the production process has been set in motion, and the main problem confronting capital in all situations, arises, i.e. access to abundant cheap labour and control over that labour - that a more established colonial state, which can be a close collaborator in the resolution of this problem, becomes necessary.[24] The relationship between capital and the state was most eloquently and scientifically analysed by Engels, especially in Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State; by Marx in many of his works; and by Lenin, especially in his analysis of capitalism as imperialism. More recently, work on the role of the colonial state in facilitating the capitalist process in the colonies, bears out a thesis which is central to all materialist analysis of the internationalisation of capital and of capitalist social relations.[25]

In Southern Africa especially, although this phenomenon is prevalent on the whole continent in varying intensities, the commoditisation of labour, i.e. the transformation of labour into labour-power, into a commodity - assumed the

specific form of migration. The migratory form is not peculiar to Southern Africa nor to Africa for that matter, rather, it is a characteristic of imperialism globally.(26) The movement of labour from certain areas of the world to those centres of capitalist production where commodity production is already well established - mainly in industry and manufacturing - is well documented.(27) The exploitation of labour through the migrancy form has specific significance for capitalism in terms of levels of profit, control over labour, reproduction of labour and 'containment' of the capitalist crisis of over-production.(28)

But, not only does migration have specific advantages for capitalist accumulation, it also has very fundamental implications for peasant differentiation.(29) The transformation of peasant producers into sellers of labour power and producers of commodities in mining and agriculture in Swaziland and in South Africa, not only created a new social division of labour and a new social class i.e. a predominantly male migrant proletariat, but it also changed the social division of labour in the rural areas, which change had very serious consequences for the subsistence sector and especially for women as producers and reproducers.(30)

Underlying the movement of labour into the centres of capitalist production is coercion, and in the colonies generally, coercion was often justified by the racist ideology which accompanied the imposition of colonial domination. 'Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power.'(31) The main forms of coercion of labour used over the last

century in Southern Africa have been land alienation, taxation, repressive legislation, usury and indebtedness, and outright abduction.(32) '....the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of labour, this fearful and painful expropriation....forms the prelude to the history of capital. It comprises a series of forcible methods....the expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most odious.'(33)

Taking up the argument stated earlier, that initially capital did not depend upon the existence of a fully established colonial state to exploit labour and thereby begin the process of commoditisation within Swaziland (and in South Africa), we would like to argue further that therefore, it is very important to make the distinction, albeit theoretical, between the initiation of the process of commodity production and the existence of capitalism as a social system i.e. with established economic, political, legal and ideological structures. 'By capitalism is meant that stage of the development of commodity production at which not only the products of human labour, but human labour-power itself, becomes a commodity.'(34)

And, it is only when capital is unable to resolve the labour question through the rudimentary repressive state apparatus like the police, that the other state apparatuses - the law in particular - come into play, and the colonial state as an administrative and controlling mechanism, mainly of labour, is established. In Swaziland, the creation of

effective state structures was preceded by several commissions and reports, the most important of which was the Pim Report of 1931 - 1932,[35] which gave detailed guidance on how to establish efficient colonial state structures, based on the experiences of India, Indonesia, and various other colonies.

Therefore, it is appropriate to argue that in fact the rationale behind the establishment of the colonial state is dictated mainly by capital's demands for a cheap and abundant supply of labour, and that the colonial state becomes the 'policeman' of monopoly capital in the exploitation of labour in the colonies.

We shall now go on to show how the mining industry in Swaziland began and how it operated for at least twenty years prior to the formal colonial domination of that country, i.e. before political, legal and administrative structures were developed - and that in fact it was pressure from capital located in mining which pushed the British government into declaring Swaziland as a 'protectorate' in 1902, in addition of course to the outcome of the Anglo-Boer War, which ended that year.[36]

<u>The Development of the Mining Industry in Swaziland - from 1886</u>

The mining industry in Swaziland began in 1886 with the establishment of the Havelock Gold Mining Company Limited, which had a registered capital of £120,000 and its head office was in Liverpool. The Komati Gold Fields Syndicate Limited, whose offices were also based in the United Kingdom (London), together with the Mdimba Concession, Swaziland, had invested approximately £30,000

and £16,500 respectively,[37] in the search for gold which swept like a mania over Southern Africa during the 1880s. One of the main reasons behind the flood of concessionaires who entered Swaziland during this period, was the hope that the rich deposits of gold found on the Witwatersrand extended to Swaziland as well. By 1889, Mr F.B. Doering, the manager of the Forbes Reef Gold Mining Company Limited - the largest mining concern in the country at that time with an invested capital of over £30,000, reported that 'Seventy-eight white workmen and officials are employed, and three hundred kaffirs (sic) and a manager, and ten British workmen have just arrived from England and are now on their way up country to develop the property of the subsidiary company'.[38]

Large deposits of haematite (iron ore) of excellent quality were 'discovered' at this time as well.[39] Deposits of tin, coal and asbestos were also mined in the years following the 1902 Protectorate Proclamation, and of these, tin was to prove to be the most lucrative, until the 1930s when the world market price of tin crashed, and the industry in Swaziland became unviable.

Asbestos (amianthus) has been mined since 1927, first by a Rhodesian firm which paid £254,699 for the concession rights 'from the previous holders', and which had, by 1932, invested £22,750 on the development of the mine.[40] Although according to the Pim Report (1932), 'The management estimated that the present value of the ore (asbestos) reserves....in normal times should yield at least £2,500,000 worth of fibre at a depth of fifty feet below the river level, and that the life of the mine would

be at least ten years with a possible extension of another ten years',[41] in 1938 Turner and Newell, a British multinational with extensive interests in other mining operations in Southern Africa, resumed operations, and has been mining the asbestos ore ever since. Coal and iron ore have remained the other major mining enterprises in the country to date, although the latter will soon be depleted.

A comprehensive analysis of the mining industry in Swaziland up to the present time still remains to be done, as is the case with the other sectors of the Swazi economy, probably with the exception of agriculture - especially non-capitalist/subsistence agriculture - which has received some attention from 'development experts' over the last three decades.[42] Most works on Swaziland provide a few statistics on production and ownership of the various mining enterprises, or just make passing mention to the existence of the industry, but seldom make an analysis of the social and political role which the industry has played, especially in terms of proletarianisation within the Swazi economy. It is almost as though all Swazi miners were proletarianised outside Swaziland, in the mines of South Africa.

Unfortunately, we are unable to rectify this anomaly presently, because of the particular focus of this study on agricultural workers, but hopefully other scholars will soon give due attention to this very important task. 'The problem is not only to provide a written record of this tradition (of class consciousness - P.M.) but more fundamentally to clarify the role the working class plays in the creation of its own history.'[43]

One of the reasons for the lack of serious analysis of this particular sector of the Swazi economy might be the fact that, until the mid-1930s when the Havelock Asbestos mines were put into active production, the mining industry in Swaziland was completely eclipsed by the South African mining industry which developed by leaps and bounds, especially in the first half of this century. This was particularly in terms of the extensiveness of resources in South Africa, especially of gold; the effective extraction and control of labour; favourable economies of scale and the rapid development of a necessary infrastructure i.e. railways and harbours; and of course, the very high levels of profit made in the short term. Consequently, the Swazi mining industry stumbled along for the first twenty to thirty years, and as the South African industry became more efficient, bigger and more profitable, so interest and capital in Swaziland dwindled. By 1915 - 1916 the gold mines in Swaziland had become unviable, and capital was concentrating on the South African economy. Writing in 1932, Pim said that 'Nothing more than desultry renewals with inadequate capital have marked the industry since that time. The mining houses who hold the mineral concessions for a large part of the area are disinclined to take new risks in distant areas when their capital is required for the expansion of already developed mines. The fact that the capitalists of the early mining days have practically all withdrawn from the South African industry and that the shares are now for the most part held by banks and small investors in Paris and New York has further tended to a lack of interest in possible

developments.'(44)

As indicated by the rather inadequate statistics available on gold production in Swaziland (see Table I), in spite of an apparent resurgence of the industry between 1920 - 1949, by the 1950s the industry had reached its lowest production levels ever, and since then it has not been revived. The same can be said of tin, which was at its peak during the first twenty years of production, reaching a value of over a million pounds (in profits) but which also collapsed during the 1930s - probably due to the historic capitalist crisis of that period, the so-called Great Depression, from which it never recovered.(45) The decline in tin mining was probably for the better, in terms of the geological consequences which the industry was having for the area surrounding it. Because it was alluvial mining, it resulted in what Pim described as 'very serious disfigurement of the country', and caused 'considerable damage to property by erosion. The amount of silt caused by their operations to flow into the Little Usutu and some other tributaries of the Usutu is also so great as to require consideration in connection with any irrigation schemes projected on that river.'(46)

What is probably a more important reason for the lack of political analysis of the mining industry in Swaziland in terms of proletarianisation, is that most of the studies so far have concentrated on the ruling class and have continued the tradition of ascribing a dominant role to ruling class politics, thereby undermining and understating the importance of workers and their struggles outside the most conspicuous political arena. Nowhere in

TABLE I

Gold Production in Swaziland 1886-1950

Year	Vol. (Oz)	Value (£)	No. of Swazi workers	No. of whites	Average wage of Swazi workers (£)
1886	-	-	100	20	-
1889	-	-	300	88	-
1907-1916	94,159	399,070	407	43	24
1916-1929	5,648	24,340	1,725	75	-
1929-1949		295,692	-	-	-
1950-	-	22,182	-	-	-

Source: compiled from Hailey and Pimm.

the literature surveyed have we come across mention or discussion of any resistance by the Swazi people to working in the local mines, although as will be shown in the next section of this chapter, resistance to working in the mines in South Africa was openly expressed in various ways. During the early years of the mining industry in Swaziland, labour shortage was not a problem for two reasons. First of all, as indicated by the statistics on Tables I and II, the industry was very small and required only a few hundred workers. Therefore, although the South African mines were already clamouring for more cheap labour by the end of the last century and had begun to institutionalise the mechanisms of labour recruitment and control,[47] companies in Swaziland were more concerned about the lack of capital needed to develop the industry. In an attempt to woo capital, A.M. Miller of the Swazieland Corporation Limited argued in 1900 that 'These concessions also have the wood and water conserved to them, and they confer privileges far in advance of those enjoyed in other mining centres (presumably South Africa - P.M.), <u>cheaper labour and more freedom from restrictions</u>'.[48] (my emphasis).

Secondly, Swazi workers were reluctant to work in South African mines, especially on the Witwatersrand, and even before the Anglo-Boer War (1898 - 1902) there had been less than 2,000 Swazi migrants in those mines. 'The reason given by the Swazi(s) themselves for this is the great mortality amongst them when on the Rand.'[49] Forbes went on to give another reason why Swazi workers refused to go to the Rand. In addition to refusing recruitment

by touts, and insisting instead on finding their own way to the nearest coal mines in nearby Baberton and Middleburg,(50) 'Natives (sic) have no ambition to make money for its own worth or for the power it gives, their greatest ambition is to earn just enough to enable them to live in their own country, without the necessity of working for another for the rest of their lives.'(51)

Nevertheless, one cannot assume that because no mention is made in any literature of resistance to local mine work, that therefore conditions of labour and wages were better than in South African mines. Nor that death rates and accident rates were any lower locally. On the contrary, it seems that local work was less renumerative as Miller's statement earlier on claimed, and in a situation where capital was becoming increasingly scarce, the local mine owners probably cut the costs of production where it was easiest i.e. in relation to workers' wages, living conditions and conditions of work.

It is very difficult to estimate in a representative manner how much Swazi workers in local mines were earning per month, although the 1916 annual average figures provided by the Pim Report (1932) suggest an average wage of £24 a year per worker in the gold and tin industries, compared to 1½ times that much having been offered by Forbes for work on the Rand twenty years earlier.(52)

Underlying this ability to choose where and when to work was the availability of land as an alternative source of reproduction at the end of the last century. But after 1902, not only was most of the land appropriated, but the enforcement of existing taxes and the imposition of additional

taxes, combined with natural disasters like the persistent droughts and the after-effects of the rindepest epidemic (1896 and 1902) which killed off most of the Swazi cattle,[53] drastically reduced the alternative to waged labour and set the scene for the effective implementation of labour extractive policies, with the active collaboration of the Swazi aristocracy. Over the next fifty years, the colonial state in Swaziland actively pursued a policy of collaboration with the South African recruiting agencies in the provision of Swazi labour to the South African mining industry.

Mechanisms of Labour Extraction and the Role of the Colonial State and the Swazi Aristocracy

The institutionalisation of the migrancy system within the Swazi economy was underpinned by two important factors: the need by South African capitalism for abundant and cheap migrant labour, especially for the first fifty years of this century, and, even greater need by the Swazi colonial state for the revenues which migrant labour made available to it through various forms of taxation. These factors were a reflection not only of the emerging capitalist system, but more importantly of the character which capitalism would assume within the region i.e. with South Africa as the centre of capitalist production and countries like Swaziland becoming suppliers of cheap Black migrant labour, with all the economic and political consequences such an unequal relationship has implied. The formal integration of Swaziland into the Customs Union in 1910 completed the structural dependency of the Swazi economy upon South Africa. It also guaranteed capital

unrestricted access to a limited but important market for South African commodities to date.[54]

There were three main mechanisms which capital used in the process of labour extraction within Swaziland and the region in alliance with the Swazi aristocracy and the colonial state which played a crucial role in their implementation and effectiveness. These were land alienation; taxation; and coercive legislation. Of these, taxation became the most important source of revenue and the most effective form of labour coercion, although the absence of land as an alternative source of reproduction was a necessary condition for an effective taxation system. Combined with repressive legislation, these three mechanisms underly the history of proletarianisation in Swaziland (and Southern Africa) and the struggle of the producing classes against capital and the colonial state.

Land Alienation

One of the primary prerequisites of colonial domination was the dispossession of the people of their land and livestock. Extensive land alienation by settler colonialists was particularly characteristic of Southern Africa, especially during the first two decades of this century. For while the peasantry had access to arable land, it not only was able to resist rapid proletarianisation, but some sections of this class were able to effectively compete with the settlers for the emerging home market in terms of supplying agricultural products. Although this did not happen in Swaziland for reasons which will be discussed in Chapter four, the case

of the Transkei peasantry at the end of the last century is a very good example of how sections of the South African peasantry were able to produce an agricultural surplus sufficient to feed the mining communities around Kimberly in the 1880s.(55)

Land alienation therefore formed a crucial element not only in the initial accumulation by the settlers, but more importantly, it was a necessary condition for the development of a capitalist system which is dominated and controlled mainly by a white settler ruling class.(56) As was stated above, land expropriation forms the first phase of commodity development, and land becomes a commodity, an essential element in capitalist production - whether it is in the mining of mineral resources like gold and diamonds, or in the production of agricultural commodities.

For the colonised, land assumed a new character, a new relationship. It became the medium through which the unequal relationship between labour and capital was manifested. It also became a scarce resource, whose scarcity increased with time, use, and the growth in numbers of the producing classes. While on the one hand the settlers appropriated unto themselves huge areas of the best and most productive land, often leaving it fallow and unused for most of the time, the producing classes were expected to reproduce themselves and capital - through labour - on ever-diminishing land resources. Land and labour became the linchpin upon which capital depended for its realisation, and while land was scarce for the reproduction of labour, it was abundant for the realisation of capitalist profit. The conditions for the reproduction

of labour were increasingly undermined through deliberate colonial state policies, thereby forcing labour into commodity production, while on the other hand, capitalist industry and agriculture benefited from the increasing pauperisation and landlessness of the colonised. The history of land alienation and its consequences in Southern Africa is well documented. This extract from Lenin's 'Capitalism and Agriculture', seems most appropriate at this stage: 'Indeed, the fundamental and main trend of capitalism is the elimination of small production by large-scale production both in industry and in agriculture. But this process must not be taken only in the sense of immediate expropriation. This elimination process also includes a process of ruination, of deterioration of the conditions of farming of the small farmers, which may extend over years and decades....The task of the scientific investigator....is first of all precisely to define the symptoms of their ruin, which are by no means simple or uniform, and secondly, to reveal these symptoms, to trace them, and as far as possible, to calculate how widespread they are and what changes they undergo at various times.'(57) In the case of Swaziland, one of the clearest manifestations of land expropriation was food shortage.

Prior to the colonial period, the Swazi people had lived a subsistence existence, producing enough to see them through until the next harvest. Consequently, the spectre of drought and famine hung over the society and region constantly. There was no development of irrigation, and agriculture remained at a very low level. In fact, many important historical events which occurred in the region

are dated in terms of the severest droughts and famines, and the Mfecane - the great diaspora of the early nineteenth century - has been partly explained in terms of land scarcity and as a consequence of the severest drought in the known history of the region.(58)

But the problem of food shortage cannot be discussed or understood outside the political economy of a society, and in the case of Swaziland, food shortage in the twentieth century is intimately related to the development of capitalist relations of production, particularly in land. It is not merely a consequence of the lack of access to arable land and production inputs, nor is it due only to backward production methods. Rather, it is the combination of both these factors seen vis-a-vis the development and dominance of commodity production. Therefore, although the cycle of drought and famines has continued, due partly to inherent ecological characteristics of the region, the main causes of food shortage lie elsewhere. The problem is located within the economic system which redefined food production in terms of limited peasant subsistence production, and food exports - cash crops - in terms of large-scale capitalist production. Consequently, while on the one hand there might be a food shortage among the peasants most of the time, there is clear evidence that commodity agriculture tends to grow concomitantly, and large surpluses of 'export' crops are produced through large-scale production and the use of advanced technology. One is able to discern this process in Swaziland, especially during the first half of this century in relation to South African commodity agriculture, and later,

in relation to the development of commercial agriculture i.e. sugar, citrus, timber and pineapples in Swaziland. This scenario can in fact be extended across the African continent, and to the rest of the Third World where capitalism engenders and maintains a system of uneven and unequal distribution of land and food resources.(59)

The rapid growth of the white petty trader class in Swaziland in the first decade of this century was one of the most important indicators that the people were not producing enough food. As Pim unwittingly explained '....the main industry of later times, that of selling grain to the natives (sic), did not commence until after the depletion of native resources by the very heavy losses of cattle caused by the epidemics of 1896 - 1897 and of 1902 and by the disturbance during the Boer War. Up to that point the natives appear to have been self-supporting except in years of drought, and Europeans supplied themselves with grain from native sources. After the Boer War the number of traders increased and their trade in grain was extended under the stimulus of bad seasons.... The trade was further stimulated by the extensive removals of natives from European areas in 1914 and later years as this reduced the area for their methods of shifting cultivation and so affected native production.'(60)

Several references are made to food shortage and its effects on labour recruitment in the Transvaal Labour Commission Report of 1903. Although one white labour recruiter argued against a suggestion that starvation and the inability to pay hut tax would push labour out of subsistence saying that '....it is rather against it,

because the native - the Swazi especially - will not come away and leave his wife and family to starve. They will not leave them there',[61] the shortage of food and the resort to food credit did have an effect on the movement of labour into the migration flow.

The petty traders were an important link in the initial recruitment process, and they were instrumental in getting peasants into debt mainly by providing food credit facilities. 'The major inducement offered by these (traders) was credit, either in cash for taxes or food. The latter method was frequently used during bad agricultural seasons, when many peasants were unable to produce enough food for themselves. Those who could not pay in time could be recruited as labourers. The traders received a commission from white farmers and mining companies for their services.'[62]

As will be shown in the discussion of white settler agriculture in the next chapter, the production and sale of maize by the white settlers became their main agricultural activity, at least for the first 40 - 50 years of colonial rule, although the importation of maize from South Africa continued, increasing especially during the two imperialist world wars.

Food scarcity intensified as the conditions of subsistence declined on the reserves, especially after 1914 when thousands of Swazi peasants were forced to leave the white farms at the end of the five years 'grace period'. By 1941 there were at least 25,000 landless peasants in the country.[63] It is interesting to note that the Proclamation No. 2 of 1915 which forbade the sale of land

to any Swazi without the permission of the High Commissioner,[64] coincided with the recently passed 1913 Native Land Act passed in South Africa, which set the basis for the present day bantustan policy, and deprived the peoples of South Africa of their land and of their right to citizenship in the land of their birth.[65]

Scattered throughout the Colonial Reports are persistent references to the consequences of poor diet and food scarcity among the Swazi people. For example, scurvy, scabies, pellagra, gastroenteritis and anaemia were prevalent in the country, especially among children, while adults were seriously affected by tuberculosis, leprosy and various other nutrition-related diseases. Describing scurvy, the 1932 Colonial Report states that 'This disease is most prevalent towards the end of the winter and though there is practically no mortality from it, it must undermine the general health to some extent. There is always some ordinary anaemia, the result of an ill-balanced and insufficient diet....'[66] Infant mortality mainly from gastro-intestinal diseases and from malnutrition has risen steadily throughout this century, and to date is one of the biggest child killers in the country.

The Colonial Reports and most of the literature on Swaziland echo the problem of inadequate access to food and consequently an unbalanced diet among the Swazi peasantry in particular, although more recently working class people in the various sectors of the economy and especially in agriculture are seriously affected by nutrition-related diseases.[67] The 1932 Colonial Report

also points out that 'The food-stuffs grown by the natives (sic) are about one-fifth of their requirements, the remaining four-fifths being supplied by European farmers and by traders who import grain from the Union (of South Africa). In areas most favourable to the cultivation of grain, the natives often sell grain but are not infrequently found buying it back later on in the season at enhanced prices'.(68) The shortage of food worsened as conditions of reproduction were undermined not only by over use of scarce land and by backward technology, but also by increasing population pressures - in terms of both human and livestock.

For example, the 1950 Livestock and Agricultural Department Report noted that 'Deteriorating soil fertility and the steadily diminishing area available to the average family have caused cultivation to be pushed into marginal land and on to steep slopes so that yields have fallen and erosion has increased.'(69) Writing in 1950, P. Scott argued that 'Of the 34 reserves for which population statistics are available, no less than 15 have densities greater than 75 per square mile, a particularly high figure for African conditions. These reserves account for only 11 per cent of the surface area of Swaziland, but they contain 41 per cent of the total population. As many as 25 reserves have densities greater than 50 per square mile, comprising 22 per cent of the territory and accounting for 65 per cent of the total population.'(70) This tendency has persisted since then, especially during drought years, culminating in periods of severe starvation, the worst this century having devastated the region over the last five years.

It is ironical that while on the one hand Pim was anxious to show that the Swazi 'had in fact probably rather more than their share of good land' his Report in 1932 is littered with admissions that in reality, the Swazi were unable to reproduce themselves on the land allocated to them twenty years earlier. He constantly admits that the standard of living of the Swazi is very low, that they are unable to produce enough food, yet he blames the Swazi for this, although he understood very clearly the relationship between the lack of sources of reproduction in the subsistence sector and the huge outflows of mainly male migrants, and the economic and social consequences of this for peasant families. With 26,000 adult Swazi males eligible for taxation in 1931 - 1932, Pim concluded that 'The proportion, therefore, of the younger men who are away from their homes for more than six months of the year is very large....Such a proportion of absentees among the able-bodied males must have a considerable effect on the social life of the nation, and the absence is as a rule due to economic necessity and not choice....Any serious restrictions in the openings for obtaining work abroad (South Africa) would affect their position seriously, and if it coincided with a bad harvest and a restricted market for cattle, it would not be long before distress began to manifest itself.'(71) - as was the case in that very year (1931).

The role of the colonial state in manipulating land as a leverage to coerce labour out of subsistence production and into wage employment underlies the entire process discussed above. The implementation of restrictions on

land buying and the enforcement of removals from white farms after 1914 using the Squatters Law (Law 21 of 1895), which limited the number of African families allowed to live on a white-owned farm to five, stimulated the negative consequences which land scarcity had for the bulk of the peasantry. In the 1920s and 1930s the colonial state implemented a policy of forced removals from the so-called Crown Lands, to make the land in the north of the country available to the budding timber industry which today occupies large areas of the Hhohho district.

The Swazi aristocracy too had a role to play in this process of forced proletarianisation. Generally, the chiefs and the Swazi king rejected the land alienation, and as mentioned earlier in this chapter tried to resist the implementation of proclamations and land commission proposals through various appeals to the British state. Meanwhile, they had to live with the reality of less land and the consequent erosion of their political and economic authority vis-a-vis the Swazi people.

In these circumstances, a close link emerged between the allocation of land as a scarce resource by the chiefs, and the supply of labour, especially to the South African mines. The chiefs used land as a political mechanism whereby they could exert coercive pressure on the Swazi peasantry to migrate to the centres of capitalist production. 'Land shortage enhanced the importance of the chiefs as controllers of land distribution. The colonial government weakened the constitutional restraints on the chiefs' powers. Consequently, the chiefs developed into an increasingly exploitative stratum allied to the colonial

government.'(72) Kowet further argues that 'land shortage, mainly caused by the massive European appropriations, not only created a growing landless population, it also increased the oppressive and exploitative character of chieftainship.'(73)

Therefore, the shortage of land for the majority of Swazi peasants became a political weapon which the Swazi aristocracy used, almost without exception, for the benefit of capital and the colonial state first and foremost, and secondly for their own political and economic interests. With one noted exception - a chief in the Mankaiana district in the south of the country, who probably refused to collaborate with the colonial state. He and his people were severely punished. As Pim notes, 'In that area they had markedly the worst of the deal, the bulk of the area assigned to them being very broken and rugged country except for some good land in the Usutu valley and small areas elsewhere. It is almost entirely a high veld district and its fine upland valleys were assigned almost entirely to sheep farmers. The reasons for this are difficult to ascertain but were probably partly the result of the actual situation of the chief concentrations of the population, and partly of the recalcitrant attitude of the chief of that area.'(74) (my emphasis). This area (Mankaiana) and the whole of the Shiselweni district became one of the main sources of migrant labour, recording the highest rates of male absenteeism from subsistence production, and the highest levels of female migration throughout this century.(75)

Therefore, there is evidently a clear correlation

between land alienation and food shortage on the one hand, and the manipulation of land as a political leverage by both the colonial state and the Swazi aristocracy for the extraction of migrant labour to the mines on the other hand.(76)

Taxation

Of all the mechanisms of labour extraction used by the colonial state, taxation was the most pernicious and the most oppressive form. It benefited the labour recruiters from South Africa, provided the colonial state with its most important source of revenue, and also provided the Swazi aristocracy with an additional source of surplus. The four main taxes imposed upon the Swazi people - neither the chiefs nor the white settlers paid any of these taxes - accounted for over 50 per cent of the national revenue in 1932 - 1933. These were Native Tax; the Poll Tax; Native Passes Tax and the Dog Tax.

In the 1880s when taxation was first imposed in the form of the Hut Tax, it was not very effective because the peasants still had access to adequate means of subsistence and could pay the limited tax of 10 shillings per hut. The payment of this tax was challenged by the peasants when it was more vigorously enforced by the Boers during their administration of Swaziland at the end of the century. When the Boers imposed a tax of 2s 6d for road tax '...with an additional £2 per head on all farm natives (sic) who were not workers',(77) there was a national uproar which culminated in the 'Bhunu Uprising' mentioned in Chapter two. During the four years of the Anglo-Boer War, no taxes were collected, although the people experienced very heavy

losses of livestock and crops which were either stolen or destroyed by the two factions. After the war, the British colonial administration imposed and enforced a more severe taxation system. For example, '....the Hut Tax was replaced by the Poll Tax, including extra levies....But the replacement of the Hut Tax meant that it was no longer applicable to male heads of households only. The new tax (of £2) was to be paid by every adult male, regardless of whether he had neither land nor employment.'(78)

Next was the Dog Tax of 5 shillings levied on each Swazi-owned dog. This tax was especially nasty because the Swazi used the dogs to hunt small game, as a vital supplement to their already depleted diet. The heaviest tax was the so-called Native Tax. In 1932 this tax was 35 shillings for every adult male or for a man with one wife. A man with more than one wife i.e. a polygamist, had to pay 30 shillings plus an additional 30 shillings for each extra wife, to a maximum to four pounds and ten shillings.(79) Included in this tax was a 2 shillings 'contribution' to the Swazi National Fund. The background to this 'fund' and the uses to which it was put will be discussed shortly. What is most interesting about the 'Native Tax' was that it was one of the clearest examples of how patriarchal relations were reflected even in the repressive colonial state structures. Swazi women were not directly taxed because they were not engaged in wage labour initially. But more importantly, they were not regarded as adults in Swazi customary law. They are still treated as perpetual minors whether they are married, unmarried, divorced or widowed. Therefore,

although the colonial state acknowledged that women were adults (as wives), it did not challenge Swazi male patriarchy by taxing women directly. Instead, women were taxed through their husbands - as wives. The tax was basically the same for men and women, and almost all adult women in the country were taxed at some period of their lives because every woman was expected to marry - by choice or by arrangement. Therefore, the colonial state could leave Swazi male culture 'untouched' and still achieve its objectives of extracting as much revenue as it could from the people.

The heavy reliance by the colonial state on taxes paid by migrant workers was clearly summed up by Pim in his report on the financial position of the 'Territory'. 'The absence of some 8 - 10 per cent of the male population (who were remaining in South Africa for four years and more without returning to Swaziland - P.M.) is a serious diminution of the taxable capacity of the country except in so far as they may remit money to their families.'(80)

Thus it is very clear that the taxation system was based on the coloniser's 'right' to tax the colonised. The Swazi were the most heavily taxed people in Southern Africa,(81) and like the other peoples in the region, they were taxed because they were 'Natives'. There was no 'white settler tax'. When employment numbers fell so also tax revenues dropped, and for the first forty years of colonial rule the Swazi people were the main source of state reproduction. But the colonial state existed mainly for the benefit of capital and the settler classes. As far as the Swazi people were concerned, their relationship with the colonial

state was one of repression on the one hand, and almost total disinterest in their welfare as a people. Once again, Pim provides one with evidence of this relationship. 'Up to recent times (1930s) the districts tended to work as isolated units and there was a tendency simply to carry on, collecting taxes and administering justice, but being mainly absorbed in magisterial duties and in the affairs of the European section of the population. There was little thought of the future of the people....and no advantage was taken of the local knowledge of Assistant Commissioners to formulate a definite policy for the development of native (sic) interests and citizenship. Contact with them tended to be too much confined to the courts and tax-collecting tours.'(82)

The collection of taxes was undertaken by the police, unlike in Botswana and Lesotho where the chiefs were the main tax collectors. In Swaziland, the chiefs were responsible for the calling of tax-camps. This practice served the interests of the colonial state, of the chiefs, and of the labour recruiters. The colonial state was able to extract taxes, the chiefs who did not receive any renumeration from the colonial state for this service, nevertheless used the occasion to facilitate the recruitment of labour by the recruiting agents - for which they received a commission. And of course, the recruiters had easy access to cheap migrant labour. As Mr Forbes, a recruiting agent put it 'The method of recruiting in Swaziland adopted is to teach the Swazi Queen and all the principal chiefs that it is to their advantage that all able-bodied men should turn out to work, but also because

the native (sic) tribe that supplies the largest percentage of working men to the state can expect the greatest consideration at the hands of the government. The Swazi Queen and chiefs in turn bring their influence to bear on the people, and encourage them to turn out....'(83) (my emphasis). Mr Forbes went on to explain that 'I am quite convinced that the Swazi Queen and principal chiefs are quite alive to the fact that their future welfare depends to a great extent on their usefulness to the state and will do all in their power to enable us to recruit every available native to work....the Queen of Swaziland and the chiefs have no power; the most they can do is to use their influence.'(84) Those chiefs who refused to collaborate in calling tax-camps, were liable to a fine of ten pounds, which was also extended to those able-bodied men who did not turn up to the camps. The threat of withdrawal of land access rights to young males was an additional weapon used by the chiefs to ensure large turnouts at the tax-camps.

There never were any restrictions put on the recruitment of labour in Swaziland. In fact, South African agents were encouraged to recruit in the country, because the South African mines not only paid higher wages compared to local mines but the South African mining industry was stable and it was growing very quickly. Therefore it could absorb large numbers of taxable Swazi males. 'From the onset, the South African recruitment organisations were established in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland with the support of the colonial government. The development of mining, agriculture and manufacturing industries in South Africa was considered by the colonial government as a desirable source of income

in these countries, especially against the background of the policy of doing 'as little as possible' in terms of local development efforts. The colonial administration also needed funds to finance the administration which during this early period was dominated by police expenditure.'(85) In fact, the police bill in Swaziland in 1930 - 1931 was £18,387. Allowances for the chiefs amounted to only £1,667.(86)

Although Pim did suggest that the tax-collecting function should be transferred to the chiefs who had 'warmly welcomed' this proposal - probably in the hope of making some extra income out of it, 'instead of the old method of what amounted to police raids',(87) there is no evidence to support an argument that this actually occurred. However, it is interesting to note the very extensive use of Swazi police in the collection of taxes and the apprehension of tax-defaulters. The taxation system also enabled the colonial state to shift the burden of reproduction onto the peasant family, thereby containing the crisis of reproduction in the rural areas by forcing labour into wage employment. The people - men - signed up with the recruiters because they were under pressure from both the colonial state and the Swazi aristocracy to pay the taxes. As Forbes put it, 'I do not think I should be able to get them (the Swazi) to come out unless they are influenced by the Queen and the chiefs.'(88) The taxes were presented as a legal obligation which all law abiding Swazi males had to pay, under threat of a fine, imprisonment and or expulsion from a chief's area. Failure to pay taxes was the most prevalent 'criminal' offence throughout the

colonial period.

Therefore, migration to the South African mines and emerging industries was posed as a socially expected means whereby one could remain a 'good' swazi, both in relation to the colonial state and the chiefs. It also became the main means of reproduction for the migrants and their families, especially as subsistence conditions continued to decline. The onus of survival was on the peasants to migrate, and this helped contain the resentment at land alienation and the resulting food shortages. Between 1911 and 1966, the numbers of migrants to South Africa rose from 8,500 to 19,219.(89)

For the Swazi aristocracy, the migration system served both political and economic interests. Politically, the Queen Mother and chiefs could 'encourage' migration to the mines using the argument that every Swazi had a national obligation to 'buy back land'. The Swazi peasantry had not participated in nor gained in any way from the concessions granted to the white settlers. In fact, they had had to hear the worst consequences of the land alienation. But when the Swazi aristocracy realised that they could not persuade the British to return the land, even the so-called Unalloted Lands, they decided to use the land issue to their own advantage. In collaboration with the colonial administration, they instituted the Swazi National Fund in 1916 under Proclamation No. 24 of 1911. This proclamation levied an annual tax of two shillings per tax payer, and this was later incorporated into the 'Native Tax'. This fund was used for the education of young princes and the sons of important chiefs. In fact,

Sobhuza II was educated out of this fund. In 1914, the Chief Regent Gwamile established what later became known as the LIFA Fund. This fund was meant to buy back the land from the white settlers, and although Proclamation No. 2 of 1915 forbade the sale or lease of land to the Swazi except with the approval of the High Commissioner, 'collections continued up to 1918 and the total amount collected was £40,127 in addition to the sums previously collected by the Swazi themselves.'(90) Part of this money was used to buy some land, but much of it was misappropriated by the chiefs and collectors. Later, this fund was sponsored by the colonial government which 'proposed that Swazi(s) should also sell their cattle and use the money to purchase land from the Europeans for settlement schemes. Those who had no cattle to sell were required to pay the sum of five pounds to the fund.'(91)

These various funds became an additional source of wealth and privileges for the Swazi aristocracy, institutionalised within the colonial state structures as the Swazi National Treasury under the Native Administration Proclamation of 1950. The king and senior chiefs were paid from these funds, and although they were admittedly paltry sums, they were well compensated by the additional wealth they extracted from the people in the form of fines, tribute and 'gifts'.

The migration system provided the aristocracy with an important source of wealth in the form of 'commissions' paid to them by the labour recruiters. Beginning with Bhunu in the late 1890s who 'signed' a contract for a fee which gave a Boer recruiter called Grobler recruiting rights in

Swaziland,[92] the Swazi aristocracy, like that of Botswana and Lesotho, actively collaborated in facilitating the extraction of cheap Swazi labour. This reproduction of an interview with a labour recruiter in 1903 shows clearly the role which the Queen Mother played at the beginning of this century in relation to the recruitment of Swazi labour. Mr Tainton (interviewer) asked 'Is it correct that the Queen of Swaziland is in the pay of the Native Labour Association?' To which the recruiter, Mr Forbes replied, 'Well, she is in one way. I explained to the Queen that it was necessary to teach the Swazis that it was to their interest to come up here to work for the white men, and the more they turned out the more it would be of interest to the country and themselves...and I said that the Labour Association would allow her thirty pounds a month for teaching her people this. I did not put it to her that she was actually a recruiter....'[93] This policy of collaboration continued throughout the colonial and post-colonial period. As Kowet succinctly put it, 'Chiefs have a strong vested interest in migration as it provided a direct source of revenue. But they had also a wider political and economic interest in reducing the heavy surplus of labour and the excessive pressure on land. Labour migration allowed chiefs to keep control over land distribution. It provided the safety valve without which the traditional system would have faced immediate collapse.'[94]

The migration of labour out of the Swazi economy was, until the mid-1970s the main outlet of national discontent, as proletarianisation was concentrated within the South African economy. Large numbers of Swazi workers faced

capital within the context of a 'foreign' economy, and this had serious consequences for worker consciousness and for an effective struggle against exploitation and oppression.(95) But as the political economy of the region has continued to change over the last two to three decades, and the numbers of migrants to South Africa from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland have dropped dramatically, so also the levels of worker discontent and struggle within Swaziland have escalated. These issues will be discussed fully in Chapter five when we deal with the sugar industry in Swaziland.

Repressive Legislation

The third mechanism used specifically by the colonial state in the maintenance of the migration system was repressive legislation. Most of the repressive legislation applied to Africans throughout the Southern African region was initially formulated in South Africa. In particular the Anti-Squatter Laws which were an extension of the Glen Grey Act and the Master and Servants Acts were the most odious pieces of legislation in this century. They lay the basis for the Pass Laws and the many Influx Control laws which underpin the apartheid system today. In relation to Swaziland, the Anti-Squatter Laws were used to forcibly remove 'excess' labour from white farms, while providing labour for white settlers in terms of what had been estimated as a sufficient number of 'natives' required by each white farmer. The Master and Servants Acts or so-called Labour Regulation and Revenue Laws were used to 'discipline' labour, especially labour within agriculture, and they gave white farmers unlimited rights to flog, imprison and even

take the lives of Black workers who were seen to have been 'impertinent' and or 'lazy'.(96) Extended to the mining industry, these laws permitted the construction of compounds which were essentially prisons wherein African workers were subjected to many forms of coercion and brutality. For example, in response to a question about the use of compulsion in the Barberton mines, a white Pass Officer told the Transvaal Labour Commission in 1903 that 'Well, I do not know about compulsion but I saw a good deal down at Komatipoort in 1897, and I noticed that the natives (sic) were in compounds guarded by native police. If they were free to go I do not see what the police were doing'. Asked further if it was his impression that the men were not at liberty to go as they pleased, he answered in the affirmative. 'Coercion was used?' he was asked, to which he replied 'I suppose there was gentle persuasion. I should not like to say coercion.'(97)

The character of the compounds and the various mechanisms used by capital to repress and control African labour in the development of capitalism in South Africa and in the then Rhodesia has been brilliantly analysed by G. Van Onselen and by various other writers on labour migration in the region.(98) Coupled with restrictions on trading and licencing, the colonial administration was able to maintain an effective system of labour migration which has served the interests of capital, the state and the Swazi aristocracy throughout this century.

Labour Migration, Class Formation and Gender Differentiation

Although the general consequences of migration for women and for the reproduction of the peasant household

have been very widely discussed over the last two decades, and this applies as much to Southern Africa, the particular relationship between labour migration, the formation of classes and gender differentiation at a general and specific level has still to receive the urgent attention it requires. Studies like that by Caroline Ramazanoglu on Turkey[99] mark the beginning of an important trend of research which focuses on the specific consequences of capitalist development in a Third World country with regard to the movement of labour, the formation of classes and the struggles these classes are engaged in, and most importantly the visibility of women in the processes of economic, political and social transformation. As she puts it, 'As relations of production in agriculture change, there are limits to the range of consequences that can ensue, but in order to grasp what is happening throughout the society, rather than just to men, the involvement of women in these changes will have to be accounted for.... Examination of the sexual division of labour does not, therefore, provide us with general answers, rather it poses questions about the ways in which capitalism develops in different circumstances, which can only be answered through empirical investigation.[100]

In relation to Southern Africa, several studies have been done on migration as a general phenomenon, the most comprehensive being the ILO sponsored Migration for Employment Project (1977 - 1979),[101] in addition to various theses and articles by Southern African scholars. But studies on the specific effects of migration on women are few, and they still tend to emphasise the structural

effects of the absence of male labour on the reproduction of the family and the viability of the 'household'.(102) Women are still discussed more in terms of how well they can cope within the circumstances of declining reproductive resources, and the dominant question posed in most of these studies is whether the 'household' can survive, and how.

Therefore, whatever policy recommendations are made to alleviate the burden of reproduction which is borne mainly by rural women in particular, these recommendations are aimed at enabling the peasant household to survive within economies which are increasingly dominated by commodity production, especially in agriculture. In the main, the studies on rural households and the movement of labour out of the subsistence sector begin from the premise that the survival of the peasant household is of crucial importance. Consequently, the character of class relations and the consequences of migration for peasant and gender differentiation are seldom raised. The issue becomes one of how to survive within an economic system - and land system - which is assumed to be acceptable. Reformist measures in terms of increasing productivity through improved agricultural inputs, appropriate technology, access to one or two extra hectares of land, better management and improved marketing etc. are seen as the best and only way to deal with rural poverty, increasing landlessness, declining food production, urban migration and all the other unhappy conditions which characterise the rural and urban areas of Southern Africa.

If the question is posed differently, however, i.e. whether the survival of the peasant household be given such

priority, one begins to see the issues affecting rural life in a different light. It no longer is a matter of how long and how well the peasant household can remain viable, a question of whose signficance has been linked from the very onset to the ever-increasing dominance of capitalist relations. What is more important is to show how the rural people have responded to capitalist erosion of their socio-economic base, and, to extend the analysis of the consequences of phenomena like migration to all rural dwellers - at the levels of class and gender - in order to understand the implications of capitalist development for both men and women.

Women and Migration

As with the analysis of other aspects of women's lives, the discussion of the relationship between women and migration in Swaziland has been influenced by several factors which apply in other Third World societies. The overall predominance of patriarchy over the lives of rural women has tended to determine not only the reality which women have to live - socially, economically, politically, religiously and culturally - but patriarchal ideology has fetishised the existence of women within the lives of men. For example, the very concept of migration is often uncritically assumed to mean male migration, and the migration of women is seen either as a consequence of male migration or as a reaction to declining reproductive resources due to the absence of men. While these two factors have played a very important role in the movement of women out of subsistence production in most Third World countries, Swaziland included, the relationship of women

as producers of value and as reproducers of labour vis-a-vis capital is historically specific, although it may appear to be mediated through the male experience. The migration of men seems to be adequately explained in terms of state-initiated actions like land alienation, taxation, and repressive legislation, while the migration of women is more multi-dimensional and must be related not only to factors within subsistence production, but also to the particular relationship which develops between women and capital and the colonial state in the process of exploitation and the reproduction of labour.

Therefore, while on the one hand the scarcity of land and husbands; the desertion and or divorce of women by migrant men; and the decline in reproductive resources available even to the wives of migrants are very important factors in the movement of women towrds the urban areas, it is very important that we give due emphasis to the specific class and gender relations which characterise the experiences of women in the process of capitalist development. Women do not migrate only because of men or because of the consequences of male behaviour. The development of capitalism has specific class and gender implications for women as women, regardless of men.

In this section, we shall attempt to show briefly how women were affected by both state actions and male migration on the one hand, and how they responded to these influences at one level, and to commodity development at another level. This theme will be discussed more fully in Chapter five when we focus on women in the sugar industry.

Throughout Southern Africa for the first four to five

decades of this century, the extraction of cheap labour was specifically male. Capital required male labour for several reasons. Firstly, male labour was required for the labour-intensive and very heavy work involved in the mining of gold and later of coal and other minerals. This requirement was extended to the construction of harbours, the building of railways and the transportation of the various commodities produced for export to foreign markets. This tendency for mining to prefer male labour because it was/is 'stronger' physically is not peculiar to South Africa. Although in the case of South Africa the fact that the gold-bearing ore lay so deep within the bowls of the Witwatersrand, requiring not only an abundant labour force but one which could also be pushed to the limits of human capability, made male labour more suitable for the industry. Women would have been a nuisance when they became pregnant or had little children to care for, and the colonial state was not about to provide care facilities for the children of African women workers then or at any time since.(103) Capital could, in the circumstance, extract the highest levels of productivity out of a male labour force.

Secondly, by employing male labour, capital could keep the costs of that labour i.e. wages, to a minimum; use compounds which fulfilled only the barest needs of the workers; and shift the costs of the social and physical reproduction of the families of the workers - of women and children - onto the worker, in terms of remittances sent 'home', and mainly onto the shoulders of the women who were expected to remain in the reserves.(104)

Thirdly, the state taxed men and not women, and therefore it was easier to control and exploit a male labour force using the threat of imprisonment, social disfavour and expulsion from a chief's area. The denial of the right to a little piece of land on which a man's family could stay while he had to be away, was a very effective means of labour control. The patriarchal definition of the man as 'head' of the household and as the adult in the home, combined with the state's demand for various taxes which most men could not pay without selling their labour, made the recruitment of males easier.

Finally, women were not only defined as 'children' and therefore were subordinate to men, but women's work could not possibly be more important than that of men. The household division of labour defined women's work in reproductive terms only - in the fields and in the home. Therefore, if taxes were to be paid and alternative sources of reproduction sought in the absence of adequate arable land, then it was the men who had to migrate. Therefore, although Caroline Ramazanoglu argues that 'There is no logic in the development of capitalism that demands that workers be male. Wherever men are unavailable (for example through war) or are seen as too expensive, politically unreliable or otherwise stereotypically unsuitable, women have been found to have the necessary qualities for whatever work is needed. The choice of who migrates is then largely a matter of power and ideology tempered with practical considerations such as the prevailing division of labour.'[105] We would add that

at particular stages/phases in the development of capitalism, male labour is preferred to female labour. Later, the use of female labour in particular industries (like agriculture) must be seen in relation to the changes within the capitalist system generally and at the specific level, especially in the face of the recurring capitalist crisis.

In analysing the relationship between women and capital, the concept of female marginalisation has become useful in conceptualising the way women have been affected by the development of capitalism, as a social group and as members of particular classes, and how women have reacted to capitalism both at the level of production and outside the direct production process.(106) The marginalisation of women in Southern Africa must be located within the historical phases of capitalist development. Initially, women were marginalised from direct capitalist production because capital went into certain areas of production - mining, construction and transportation - and women were drawn into the circuit of capitalism as reproducers of labour 'outside' the centres of capitalist development. Their marginalisation in relation to the creation of surplus value was not only social and economic, but also geographical. Women were kept out of the centres of commodity production mainly through the use of customary (pre-capitalist) law and custom, applied by chiefs, and by a strong patriarchal ideology which restricted the expressions and movements of women outside the rural household.

In Swaziland, for example, women were not legally

forbidden by the colonial state from travelling to the urban areas in South Africa until the South African authorities - in Witbank and Breyton - complained about the presence of large numbers of Swazi women in the townships there. Once the issue was raised by the colonial state, the Swazi male 'rulers' took the opportunity to express their resentment at the mobility of women within the country (Swaziland) and to South Africa. In a letter to the Assistant Secretary of Native Affairs, Mababane dated 1st November 1930, Mr Phillips from a similar department in Pretoria complained that Swazi women in Witbank and Breyton formed '....a most undesirable class which makes a living by smuggling liquor into the locations and compounds and by immorality. It has been represented that large numbers of cases of disturbance and crimes of violence are due to the presence of these women but it is seldom possible to deal with them criminally.'[107] He went on to suggest that the problem could be solved by making Swazi women travelling to South Africa liable to the pass system. The colonial administration referred the matter to the Swazi aristocracy, who supported the idea of preventing women from travelling to South Africa on their own volition. In 1930, Sobhuza II signed a letter stating that 'The Nation (sic) is strongly opposed of (sic) its women folk to leaving their country and would arrange the matter with the Railway people to see that no woman is allowed to go beyond the border unwarranted.'[108] By 1931 'travelling' passes had been extended to all Swazi people wishing to travel to South Africa, and the South African Railways

Offices had been instructed not to allow Swazi women without passes to use their vehicles. The transporters were given the assurance by the colonial state in Swaziland that, although this action was without legal standing, they had the state's full support.

There were several responses to this action, the first coming from the Bantu Teachers' Union which argued that the passes were an inconvenience to women teachers, the wives and daughters of African missionaries and employees of the administration (domestic workers), and other women who were described as 'well-behaved Native women'. They (the BTU) were supported by the Paramount Chief Soghuza II in their complaint. Another interesting and rather militant response came from the Weselyan Church, which passed the following resolution at its Quarterly Meeting on the 2nd September 1931 stating 'This meeting begs to protest against the regulations imposed without warning making it compulsory for women and girls travelling by bus to places outside Swaziland to obtain a pass. This meeting cannot see the necessity for such a regulation and which seems to be the first step towards passes for women in Swaziland.'(109) The letter went on to point out the condemnation of the pass system as applied in South Africa, and to the struggle of the African people in that country to free themselves of the passes. The meeting also demanded to know who had been responsible for this idea in Swaziland, requesting the immediate removal of the regulation and suggesting that the people must be informed of new regulations and given due notice of the date of their operation.(110)

These responses to the extension of passes to Swazi women indicate a very important phenomenon. The reaction of the Bantu Teachers' Union, a professional body which catered for the interests of a new social class in the society and whose members included women teachers, not only articulated new class interests but also showed clearly the growing differentiation among women in the society. By the early 1930s, there was already in existence a small middle-class which distinguished itself from the bulk of the peasantry and the working class women. This class was even defining itself in terms of a new and different moral code - as 'well-behaved' - reminiscent of Victorian values. Their demands did not necessarily extend to all Swazi women, and as an extract from the minutes of the meeting between the Paramount Chief and the Resident Commissioner of 10th August 1931 indicates, 'They seem to be the only class which is inconvenienced',(111) which of course was not the case.

The colonial state responded with the argument that it was a temporary measure, and that women who were in possession of a letter or certificate from European or Native (sic) Missionaries could get passes. Therefore, the problem was resolved for that social class which did not reject the idea of the passes but merely objected to the inconvenience of having to get one. For the rest of Swazi women, the passes were an effective means of controlling their movements because it was virtually impossible to get one without the permission of a father, husband, or male guardian. All three categories of men were strongly against women travelling outside the country.

Consequently, the records show very few and eventually no applications for passes by the end of 1932, although it is very probable that women continued to go to South Africa.

Without an organisation to defend their interests, Swazi women resorted to the only means available to them - illegally crossing the borders into South Africa. As the Resident Commissioner put it '....we cannot prevent women walking over into the Transvaal along our long border and then going on to Witbank.'(112)

Swazi women left the country as migrants for various reasons other than going in search of their husbands.(113) As Reverend Nkomo explained to the Resident Commissioner in 1931 'Many women suffer from negligence and go out for work....'(114) This view was also expressed by the Assistant Commissioner - Hlatikhulu - when he said 'The real trouble is that the life of the average Swazi woman is a hard and comfortless one, and so long as the compounds and locations offer an easier and more lucrative existence, so long will there be found women ready to go there with passes or without.'(115) Women migrated out of the rural areas because of hardship and poverty. They left because, as individuals, they sought an alternative to the drugery and oppression which characterises rural life. They were not formally recruited as migrants by the recruiting agencies, therefore they were not directly engaged in commodity production in the emerging industries. Also, those sectors of the Swazi and South African economy which employed female labour, with the exception of agriculture, had not developed sufficiently

in the 1930s. Neither had the labour-power of African women become more preferable in areas like textiles and processing as happened after the second imperialist war.

Consequently, those women who moved into the towns and mining areas, went into various 'illegal' activities. They set up shebeens[116] and sold illegally brewed alcohol; they engaged in prostitution; they cooked and sold food on the streets and in the market-places without licence, and they engaged in a variety of other economic activities all of which have become known as the 'informal sector'. The concept of 'informal sector' is linked to the very process of female marginalisation, and over the last fifty years, large numbers of African women have entered the urban areas through the 'informal sector' and reproduced themselves and their families within it, never entering direct commodity production in the formal sense as workers.

It is clear that not only were women marginalised in terms of the labour-capital relation, but they were also socially and economically marginalised by the non-recognition of the work they performed in the society in terms of providing essential services to the male working class. Whether as 'shebeen Queens' or as prostitutes, or, as food vendors, urban women reproduced the working class by providing essential services which were not and generally are still not provided by capital or the state. The separation of migrant men from their wives, the poor and inadequate diet in the compounds, the non-existence of catering services for African workers in many places of work - all these services were provided by urban women

through the so-called informal sector. It was the female migrants who first settled in towns and around the mining compounds who formed the bed-rock of the modern working class family throughout Southern Africa.

Therefore, we can see how once again women are engaged in reproductive activities related directly to the capitalist process, and like the rural women who reproduce a cheap labour force which capital needs, so also the urban women emerged as an element of the working class whose work is unacknowledged and therefore unpaid for by the state and by capital. The marginalisation of women in the process of capitalist development seems to be related not only to the physical separation of women from the centres of capitalist production in the initial stages, but also to the changes which occur within the capitalist system as it develops and expands from heavy male-labour oriented industries like mining, to manufacture and processing and the development of various social services. Women's labour becomes preferable as capital restructures itself globally - in terms of shifting certain industries from one part of the imperialist world economy to another - and most importantly for our study of Swaziland, as commodity agriculture develops.

Notes

(1) Marx, K. Capital Vol I, Lawrence and Wishart, (London), 1983, p. 668.

(2) Hailey, W.M. (Lord) Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part V, (Micro-film) HMSO, (London), 1953, p. 370.

(3) Ibid. p. 370.

(4) The Glen Grey Act of 1894, 'which imposed a labour tax and introduced individual land holdings to make peasants migrate to the mines' in Jack and Ray Simons Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950, International Defense and Aid Fund, (London), 1983, p. 43.

(5) Mashasha, Francis J. The Road to Colonialism: Concessions and the Collapse of Swazi Independence 1875-1926, Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford, 1977, p. 325.

(6) Ibid. p. 329.

(7) Fransman gives an extensive presentation of George Grey's arguments and his obvious satisfaction that he had achieved the main objectives of partition i.e. to safeguard the interests of the white settlers in terms of land and labour. See Fransman, M. The State and Development in Swaziland 1960-1977, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sussex, 1978, pp. 60-63.

(8) Ibid. p. 61.

(9) See Mlahagwa, J.R. 'Capital, Class and State in Colonial Swaziland: Capital Accumulation and the demise of the Swazi State', (Private circulation paper), Conference on Research in Progress in Southern Africa, University of York, 1984; Fransman, M. op. cit.

Chapter 2; Mashasha, F.J. op. cit.

(10) See Miller, A.M. The Swazieland Corporation Limited, (London), April, 1900.

(11) Mlahagwa, J.R. op. cit.

(12) Marx, K. Capital Vol. I, p. 670.

(13) For example, Mashasha has a whole chapter on the various appeals made by both the Queen Regent and later by Sobhuza II to the British colonial authorities for the return of at least part of the land.

(14) Mashasha, F.J. op. cit. pp. 371-372.

(15) Mashasha argues that they were further intimidated by the almost total dispossession of the neighbouring peoples in South Africa.

(16) Levin, R. 'Traditional Rulers or Bourgeoisie? Class and Ideology in Swaziland', Working Paper No. 8, University of Liverpool, Department of Political Theory and Institutions, 1984, p. 10.

(17) Mashasha, F.J. op. cit. p. 386.

(18) See Hailey, W.M. (Lord) op. cit. and Pim Report The Financial and Economic Situation of Swaziland, HMSO, (London), 1932.

(19) Mashasha, F.J. op. cit. p. 387.

(20) Ibid. p. 392.

(21) Mlahagwa, J. op. cit. p. 8.

(22) Lenin, V.I. Collected Works Vol. I (On the So-Called Market Question), p. 93.

(23) The history of Southern Africa in particular shows how commoditisation began before the colonial state was fully-established. In particular, the

development of the diamond and gold industries required only the barest colonial administrative structures, using mainly the police during the early period.

(24) See Innes, D. Anglo American and the Rise of Modern South Africa 1850-1950, Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1984, (Chapter two). Also Johnstone, F. Race, Class and Gold, Routledge and Kegan Paul, (London), 1976.

(25) See Innes, D. op. cit.; Review of African Political Economy, No. 5, 1976; No. , 1977; and No. 8, 1977.

(26) Berger, J. and Mohr, J. A Seventh Man, Penguin, (London), 1975.

(27) Ibid.; also ANC Occasional Research Papers. 'Foreign African Labour in South Africa', ECA Conference on Migratory Labour in South Africa, Lusaka, 1978; also Levy, Norman, The Foundations of the South African Cheap Labour System, Routledge and Kegan Paul, (London), 1982.

(28) Berger, J. and Mohr, J. op. cit.; Malaba, L. 'Supply, Control and Organisation of African Labour in Rhodesia', in ROAPE, No. 18, 1980. Also, Van Onselen, C. Chibaro - African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1933, Pluto Press, (London), 1976.

(29) Lenin, V.I. The Development of Capitalism in Russia, Lawrence and Wishart, (London), 1964, pp. 182-183.

(30) See Wolpe, H. 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power

in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid', Economy and Society, Vol. I, No. 4. Also, Review of African Political Economy, (Special Issue on South Africa), No. 7, 1976.

(31) Marx, K. Capital Vol. I, p. 703.

(32) See Legassick, M. 'Capital Accumulation and Violence', Economy and Society, Vol. 3; Legassick, M. 'South Africa: Forced Labour, Industrialisation and Racial Discrimination', in R. Harris (ed.) The Political Economy of Africa, Boston, 1974; Johnstone, F. op. cit.; Lacey, M. Working for Boroka: The origins of a coercive labour system in South Africa, Ravan Press, (Johannesburg), 1980; Wilson, F. Labour in the South African Gold Mines 1911-1969, African Studies Series 6, CUP, 1972; and Nzula, A. et al, (ed.) R. Cohen, Forced Labour in Colonial Africa, Zed Press (London), 1979.

(33) Marx, K. Capital Vol. I, p. 714.

(34) Lenin, V.I. Collected Works, Vol. I, p. 93.

(35) The Pim Report The Financial and Economic Situation of Swaziland, op. cit.; Liversage, V. Swaziland Development, (London), HMSO, 1946.

(36) This argument has already been stated in Chapter two.

(37) De Winton, Francis (Sir) Report on Swazieland, HMSO, (London), 1890.

(38) Ibid. p. 75.

(39) The Swazi were mining ore and making spear heads and ornaments with ore (iron) before the colonialists 'discovered' the deposits. See Kuper, H. The Swazi

A South African Kingdom, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1963.

(40) The Pim Report, op. cit. p. 16.

(41) Ibid. p. 16-17.

(42) See Low, A. 'Farm-Household Theory and Rural Development in Swaziland', Development Study No. 23, University of Reading, Department of Agricultural Economics and Management, 1982; Nyberg, A.J. and Greenfield, J.C. Swaziland Agricultural Sector Memorandum, Main Report, December 1980; Monitoring and Evaluation Study No. 3 'The Effect of Wage Employment on the production impact of the Rural Development Areas Programme', M. and E. Unit, RDAP, Mbabane, March 1980; World Bank Report Swaziland Rural Development Project: Appraisal Report (restricted circulation) January 1977; ILO World Employment Programme Research, Working Papers, Migration for Employment Project on Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, ILO, 1977, 1978, 1979, Geneva. These are just a few examples of the work which has been published on non-capitalist and petty-commodity production in Swaziland.

(43) Cohen, R. et al, African Labour and Colonial Capitalism, p. 20.

(44) Pim Report. p. cit. p. 15.

(45) It is interesting to note how vulnerable some metals, like tin, are to serious economic crises in the capitalist system. Just as happened in the 1930s crisis, so also the tin market has virtually collapsed presently due to the present crisis of

over-production.

(46) Pim Report, op. cit. p. 16.

(47) The formation of WENELA (1900) and the use of the compound and contract systems.

(48) Miller, A.M. op. cit. p. 16.

(49) See Transvaal Labour Commission, 1903, (Minutes of proceedings and evidence) HMSO (London), Mr Forbes' Evidence, p. 103.

(50) This was probably because many migrants had been misled by the touts and 'agents' about the wages they would receive on arrival at the mines, and about the conditions of work. On arrival they often found themselves bound by the 'contracts' which they had entered into unknowingly.

(51) Transvaal Labour Commission, op. cit. p. 103.

(52) Ibid. see Mr Forbes' Evidence.

(53) 'At the 1904 census, after the Boer war and the epidemic of cattle diseases, the return of Native (sic) cattle, almost certainly incomplete, was 37,432; it had been roughly estimated at 300,000 in 1894' - P. Scott 'Land Policy and the Native Population in Swaziland', in Geographical Journal, Vol. 117, 1951, p. 436.

(54) Halpen, J. South Africa's Hostages, Penguin African Library, 1965, London.

(55) See Bundy, C. The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry, Heinemann, (London), 1979. There are also other studies which show this phenomenon in other parts of Africa. For example, see Cowen, M.P. Capital and Household Production: the case of

Wattle in Kenya's Central Province 1903-1964, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1979.

(56) Literature on white ruling class Clarke, S. 'Capital, "fractions" of capital and the state: "neo-Marxist" analysis of the South African state', Capital and Class, No. 5, and, Innes, D. and Legassic, M. 'Capital Restructuring and Apartheid: a critique of constructive engagement' in African Affairs.

(57) Lenin, V.I. Capitalism and Agriculture, op. cit. p. 27.

(58) See Hedges, reference in Bonner, P. Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires, Cambridge University Press, London, 1983.

(59) There is a wealth of information on the food crisis affecting the Third World and especially Africa at this time. See Dinhan, B. and Hines, C. Agribusiness in Africa, Earth Resources Research Ltd., London, 1982; and Moore Lappe, F., Collins, J. Food First, Abacus, 1982, among others. Some of the literature specific to Southern Africa is listed in Appendix I.

(60) The Pim Report, op. cit. p. 12.

(61) See the Transvaal Labour Commission, op. cit. p. 105.

(62) Kowet, K.D. Land, Labour Migration and Politics in Southern Africa: Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1978, p. 90.

(63) Scott, P. 'Land Policy and the Native Population in Swaziland', op. cit.

(64) The Pim Report, op. cit.

(65) See Mashasha, F.J. op. cit. p. 347.

(66) Colonial Reports, Swaziland, Annual, 1932, London, HMSO, p. 6.

(67) This issue of workers' health will be dealt with in Chapter five.

(68) Colonial Reports, 1932, p. 6.

(69) Swaziland Livestock and Agricultural Department Report, 1950, HMSO (London).

(70) Scott, P. op. cit. p. 442.

(71) The Pim Report, op. cit. p. 24.

(72) Kowet, K.D. op. cit. p. 51.

(73) Ibid. p. 75.

(74) The Pim Report, op. cit. p. 18.

(75) This factor will be shown in the data in Chapter five.

(76) This argument will be pursued further in relation to the sugar industry in Swaziland in Chapter five.

(77) Miller, A.M. op. cit. p. 11.

(78) Kowet, K.D. op. cit. p. 90.

(79) The Pim Report, op. cit. (I suppose the limit was a favour to those wealthy peasants who had more than two wives.)

(80) Ibid. p. 27.

(81) Booth, A. 'The Development of the Swazi Labour Market, 1900-1968', in South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 6, 1982.

(82) The Pim Report, op. cit. pp. 39-40.

(83) Transvaal Labour Commission, op. cit. p. 103.

(84) Ibid. p. 103.

(85) Kowet, K.D. op. cit. pp. 96-97.

(86) The Pim Report, op. cit. p. 34.

(87) Ibid. p. 42.

(88) Transvaal Labour Commission, op. cit. p. 105.

(89) Kowet, K.D. op. cit. p. 97.

(90) The Pim Report, op. cit. p. 19.

(91) Kowet, K.D. op. cit. p. 100.

(92) Fransman, M. The State and Development in Swaziland 1960-1977, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Sussex, 1978.

(93) Transvaal Labour Commission, op. cit. p. 105.

(94) Kowet, K.D. op. cit. p. 100.

(95) The consequences of labour migration for worker consciousness, organisation and effective bargaining have been discussed very comprehensively in various works. See references above on migration.

(96) See especially Lacey, M. op. cit.; Luckhardt, K. and Wall, B. Organise or Starve: The history of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, Lawrence and Wishart, (London), 1980; Cook, A. Akin to Slavery: Prison Labour in South Africa, IDAF, (London), 1982.

(97) Transvaal Labour Commission, op. cit. p. 288.

(98) See reference above.

(99) Ramazanoglu, C. 'Labour Migration, Class Formation and Gender - the case of Turkey', presented at the Gender and Class in the Third World Conference, London School of Economics, October, 1985.

(100) Ibid. p. 8 /102. See above references.

(102) See references above and Rosen-Prinz, B. and Prinz, F.A. 'Migrant Labour and Rural Homesteads: An investigation into the Sociological Dimensions of the migrant labour system in Swaziland', MEP - ILO. 1078; De Vletter, F. 'Migrant Labour in Swaziland: Characteristics, Attitudes and Policy

Implications', MEP - ILO, 1978; also, South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 5, No. 5, 1979/80, Special Issue on Botswana; Gordon, E. 'The Women Left Behind: A study of the wives of migrant workers of Lesotho', MEP - ILO, 1978.

Armstrong, A. and Russell, M. A situation analysis of women in Swaziland, UNICEF/SSRU, Swaziland, February, 1985.

(103) Zola, E. Germinal, Penguin Classics, (London), 1982; Marx, K. Capital Vol. 1.

(104) See above references.

(105) Ramazanoglu, C. op. cit. p. 17.

(106) Scott-MacEwen, A. 'Urban Women in LDC's: Examining the "Female Marginalisation" Thesis' for publication in the Journal of Development Studies, 1985.

(107) National Archives - Lobamba, Swaziland, File No. 1470, Letter from Phillips to Nicholson, 1st November 1930.

(108) National Archives, Lobamba, Swaziland, File No. 1470, Letter from Sobhuza II, dated 27th December 1930, Ref. No. 860/30.

(109) National Archives, Lobamba, Swaziland, File No. 1470, Correspondence from Wesleyan Church, 1930/1931.

(110) National Archives, Lobamba, Swaziland, Ibid. 1930/1931.

(111) Ibid. 10th August 1931.

(112) National Archives, Lobamba, Swaziland, File No. 1470, Response of Resident Commissioner to

Nicholson (Pretoria), dated 19th December 1930.

(113) See Kuper, H. The Uniform of Colour, Negro Universities Press, (New York), 1969.

(114) National Archives, Lobamba, Swaziland, File No. 1470, Meeting between Reverend Nkomo, the Acting Resident Commissioner (Bremersdorp) and the Missionary Association, 16th October 1931.

(115) National Archives, Lobamba, Swaziland, File No. 1470, Responses of Assistant Commissioners (Districts) and Staff Officers for Police to Circular 84/1930 on restriction of movement of Swazi women to the Union of South Africa. Assistant Commissioner, Hlatikhulu, 22nd January 1931.

(116) A shebeen is an unlicenced drinking place, very common in the townships of Southern Africa, which usually sell illegally brewed/distilled alcohol. They are also places of entertainment in the absence of 'proper' recreational and entertainment facilities.

Chapter Four

The Development of Settler Agriculture in Swaziland - 1900 to 1950

'....Essential to our understanding of the economic, political and social structures of the poor nations are not only the macro-processes of colonialism and imperialism but also the recognition of the uneven penetration of capitalism into the Third World. It is to this process that we must attribute the virtual destruction of the "natural economy" of the pre-industrial order, the development of unequal exchange relations, and the siphoning off of the surplus created by local efforts...'(1) The law of uneven development is a central characteristic of capitalist development, especially of capitalism as a global economic system of surplus extraction, whose operations Lenin so brilliantly analysed in his works on imperialism.(2)

This uneveness manifests itself not only at the level of production relations, i.e. in the forms of surplus extraction and of class struggles - but also in the relative rate of development of commodity production in the various sectors of a capitalist economy. Historically, agriculture has tended to develop at the slowest rate. 'The basic laws of the development of capitalism are common for industry and agriculture, but that does not exclude that they have certain specific features in agriculture. The most important of these features are the lagging of the development of agriculture behind that of industry...'(3) Lenin was more definitive about this tendency. 'This is characteristic of all capitalist countries and is one of the most important causes of the disproportion in the

development of the different branches of national economy, of crisis, and of the high cost of living.'(4) Why does agriculture tend to be the most backward sector of the capitalist economy? This question can only be answered through an analysis of the specific social formation and of the relations between direct producers and those who appropriate surplus. 'The principal characterisation of a mode of production refers not to the manner in which products are exchanged but to the manner in which they are produced and the form in which the surplus labour embodied in them is appropriated.'(5) Morris goes on to explain that 'The relation of real appropriation concerns the relationship between the immediate producer and the means and object of labour. It theorises the forces of production not in a technicist manner but as a social relation of production. A social relation that is dominated by the social relations of property and is structured in combination with them.'(6)

The forms through which surplus is produced and appropriated - e.g. labour tenancy - require careful analysis, particularly in relation to commodity agriculture. As Lenin cautioned 'It should be added that our literature frequently contains too stereotyped an understanding of the theoretical proposition that capitalism requires the free, landless worker. This proposition is quite correct as indicating the main trend, <u>but capitalism penetrates into agriculture particularly slowly and in extremely varied forms</u>. The allotment of land to the rural worker is very often to the interests of the rural employers themselves, and that is why the allotment-holding rural worker is a type to be found in all capitalist countries. The type

assumes different forms in different countries.' (7) (my emphasis - P.M.) Therefore, any analysis of commodity relations in agriculture must be placed within an historical context, within the process of transition from pre-capitalism to capitalist production through which the forms of real subsumption of labour by capital are manifested. In the case of Swaziland, this period covers the first fifty years of this century.

Whilst we recognise the importance of an in depth analysis of the forms of surplus extraction pertaining to commodity agriculture, this requires specific and detailed information and statistics which would confirm and highlight the theoretical arguments made about that social formation. Unfortunately, unlike in the case of South Africa where detailed records have been kept since the end of the last century, with Swaziland the information on the relationship between white settlers and Swazi producers is very sketchy and not sufficient for an in-depth analysis. Consequently, our analysis of the development of commodity agriculture in Swaziland, whilst set within the first five decades of this century, will concentrate on the period of the 1930s (and the so-called Great Depression) up to the end of the second imperialist war in 1945/1950. We shall depend heavily on the report by Pim (1932) (8) as it is the only official document containing a statistical and descriptive record of the socio-economic situation in Swaziland up to the 1930s.

The excellent analysis made by Morris of South African agriculture will serve as an important reference source, as the situation in Swaziland appears to have been

very similar to that of South Africa, with some differences which will be pointed out during the course of the analysis. Generally, however, white settlers in Swaziland were faced with many ecological, political, economic and structural problems which also confronted white South African agriculture in the first two decades of this century.[9]

In this chapter, therefore, we shall be looking at the relationship between white settlers, the colonial state and capital on the one hand, and their relationship to Swazi producers in agriculture. In the process of transition from subsistence to commodity production, white settler agriculture shared a particular relationship with the colonial state.

The general category of white settlers refers to all those of European extraction - mainly men - who settled in Swaziland at the turn of the century, and who were beneficiaries of the land appropriation (concessions) and were engaged in agriculture or trading. More specifically, white settler agriculture is that sector of production which is owned and controlled by white farmers who employed predominantly tenant labour until the 1950s,[10] producing crops like cotton, maize and tobacco, and engaging in cattle ranching as well. The difference between agribusiness and settler agriculture is related to the forms of labour pertaining to either sector - i.e. labour tenancy vis-a-vis 'free' workers, the levels of technology and capital involved and the character of relations between producers and appropriators.

Settler Agriculture in Swaziland – the First Fifty Years

One of the important questions arising from an analysis of the emergence of white capitalist agriculture in Swaziland is - was there a settler bourgeoisie and if so, when did it realise itself as a class? Most if not all the class analyses of Swaziland until presently have just stated the existence of a settler bourgeoisie, without making an historical analysis of the formation of this class.[11] The existence of a settler bourgeoisie in Swaziland agriculture cannot be assumed simply because whites occupied the best land, expropriated the resources and labour of the Swazi producers and subjected the Swazi people to over half a century of repressive and typically colonial domination.

In fact, one of the arguments we would like to propose is that for the first half of this century, the white settlers in agriculture struggled to realise themselves as a bourgeoisie. It is only when, as individuals, they collaborated with multinational capital in agribusiness that they might be described as capitalist farmers in the true meaning of the concept. Certainly, they engaged in commodity relations, using the tenancy form of surplus extraction which was a major constraint upon their attempts at class realisation. But the existence of commodity relations, especially in agriculture, does not signify or mean the immediate existence of an agricultural bourgeoisie. As Morris' analysis of South African agriculture shows,[12] the process of transformation to capitalist agriculture not only required larger inputs of capital and advanced technology and the development of

an infrastructure, but most importantly, it required that 'free' wage labour became the dominant form of surplus production. In his analysis of capitalist agriculture, Lenin argues that while the process of capitalist transformation requires the establishment of large-scale production i.e. the socialisation of the production process, '....the transition to the exploitation of hired labour is determined not only by the expansion of the area of the farm on the old technical basis....but also by raising the level of techniques of farming, by substituting a new technique for the old, by investing additional capital in the same land area in the form, for instance, of new machinery or artificial fertilisers, or by increasing the number and improving the quality of livestock, etc.'(13) He concludes that 'The chief feature and criterion of capitalism in agriculture is wage labour.'(14)

Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the attempts by white settlers to realise themselves as a capitalist class, to move from being a settler class engaged in limited commodity production and tied to a 'corvee' system, into an economically and politically effective capitalist class. While some writers like Booth and Fransman have described the attempts by white settlers to survive in the face of fierce competition with South African capital over labour and markets,(15) their work does not show the relationship between the various factors (economic, political and structural) and the process of class formation in commodity agriculture during the first fifty years.(16) Our argument is that there is a definite relationship between the forms of surplus production/

extraction and the material conditions of production on the one hand, and the character and pace of class formation and transition to capitalist agriculture on the other.

In the emergence of commodity relations in agriculture universally, the labour tenancy form has been an important mechanism of surplus extraction. Tenancy, as a relationship in which the peasant receives a plot of land from a landowner and has to work for the landowner for a certain amount of time in return,(17) predates capitalism, but, it is a particularly useful form in the initial process of capitalist accumulation. Citing the case of America, Lenin confirms Marx's argument that '....capitalism in agriculture does not depend on the form of land ownership or land tenure. Capital finds medieval and patriarchal land tenure of the most varied types: feudal, 'allotment-peasant' (i.e. dependent peasant), class, communal, state, etc. Capital subordinates all these types of land tenure to itself, but this subordination assumes various forms and is achieved in various ways'.(18)

Lenin's work on the transition to capitalist agriculture remains highly relevant to current analyses, not only because of the theoretical correctness of his arguments, but also because empirically and universally i.e. in capitalist dominated societies, agriculture has tended to develop in an essentially similar manner. In Southern Africa, pre-capitalist economic forms provided the initial structures through which capitalist agriculture first emerged, and the first fifty years of this century were characterised by the widespread use of labour tenancy.

One of the striking features of commodity development

in Swaziland is its similarities to the South African experience. As in the case of South Africa, land alienation and the institutionalisation of migration in Swaziland went hand in hand with legislation which sought to cater for the labour needs of the white settler farmers. As shown in Chapter three, legislation, especially taxation, was used very effectively to establish a steady stream of cheap labour to the mines and other industries in South Africa and in Swaziland. So also, in the case of commodity agriculture, legislation provided the means by which labour was coerced into an unequal and repressive relationship with white farmers, the character of this relationship differing slightly depending on the degree of dependency. We shall explain below the three variations in the tenancy relations pertaining to white agriculture in the pre-World War II period in Swaziland.

The similarities between South Africa and Swaziland went beyond the general characteristics of capitalist development to the specific application of laws which had been formulated in South Africa. In terms of labour tenancy, the 1913 Land Act of South Africa transformed the South African peasants living on white farms into labour tenants. According to the Native Economic Commission (1932) quoted in Morris, 'The essential features of the system were "the giving of services for a certain period in the year to the farmer by the Native (sic) and/or his family in return for the right to reside on the farmer's land, to cultivate a portion of land, and to graze his stock on the farm".' (19) Morris goes on to argue that 'Labour tenancy, a system already in existence in a

transformed form was to be the principal manner in which surplus labour was appropriated in the major areas of the countryside for many years to come. Most farmers, even before but certainly after 1913, could clearly be said to have gained their farm labour through labour tenancy arrangements.' (20)

It was no coincidence that in Swaziland a year later, the expulsion of Swazi peasants from white farms marked the end of the so-called 'five year grace period' and the beginning of a new phase in commodity relations. According to the then High Commissioner Lord Harlech's estimation, about 20,000 peasants - approximately an eighth of the total number of about 160,000 expelled - 'remained on the lands of the new European owners, as tenants'.(21) Booth argues that 'In 1914, settler farmers entered into written or informal contracts with those Swazis who after July 1st were to become disowned, to remain on the land in return for labour. A typical arrangement called for six months labour for each adult male at 10s per month. [Transvaal farmers holding grazing concessions in Swaziland commonly required the labour to be performed on their farms in the Union.] An occasional farmer required a male or two per family to contract themselves to the Rand mines, with the capitation fee (commonly £2 per head) reverting to him. Those refusing the terms, or who were not required as farm labour, were removed to the Native (sic) areas, by state force if necessary, thus in theory becoming available for local mine work.' (22)

One can safely conclude that the majority of Swazis expelled were/had been living on land owned by companies

and absentee landlords who were engaged in mining and other enterprises mainly in South Africa. As we will show below, this action prepared the way for the so-called 'Kaffir Farming' - a form of tenancy which required the payment of money rent.

Basically, there were four classes of white settlers in Swaziland by the 1920s - excluding the colonial officers and state employees and 'adventurers' who were described by Pim as 'undesirable elements'.

The longest established class were the traders. They were among the first whites to settle in Swaziland and they were involved not only in the circulation of commodities - especially the sale of maize to the Swazi people - but also in the recruitment of labour. Their role in the early years of colonialism in Swaziland was discussed in preceding chapters.

As intermediaries of capital in the process of commoditisation, they were virtually dependent upon capital, especially big merchant capital, for their survival. As Pim noted, 'The white traders are not a large class but they are of great importance to the country and more especially to the native (sic) community who are dependent on them for a large part of their requirements. While the older traders are substantial men a considerable proportion are no longer financially independent but are practically tied houses for the large wholesale firms in the Union (of South Africa) and are wholly controlled by those firms as regards the goods offered for sale.'(23) Pim was also critical of the fact that British merchant capital was being nudged out of the Swazi market by

Japanese, American and German commodities like textiles, ploughs and other agricultural goods. He claimed that 'A new element has recently been introduced by the arrival of certain traders of a new and less substantial type. Their financial resources have been very uncertain and some have disappeared after a short period leaving liabilities behind them. Their advent has tended to reduce prices but on the other hand their standards are low and they are an undersirable type for dealing with a predominantly native (sic) market.'[24] British 'snobbery' seems to have had no limits, extending even into the realms of small commodity marketing in a backward little colony like Swaziland in the 1920s and 1930s.

Besides the occasional passing reference to traders in relation to marketing and labour recruitment, there is no readily available information on this class during the period under discussion. After the end of the second imperialist war (1945) the marketing of commodities in Swaziland was increasingly taken over by South African commercial companies, and presently, the market is dominated by South African produced goods being sold by big supermarket chains and companies owned and managed by white South Africans.[25]

Turning to the white settlers in agriculture, we are able to identify four classes: absentee landlords; sheep grazers; 'poor whites'; and what Pim called 'substantial' farmers - meaning emergent capitalist farmers. Each of these classes had a specific tenancy relationship with the Swazi peasants living on their land. We shall discuss the first three categories briefly, and concentrate on the

last category, as they provide a more important political phenomenon in relation to commodity development and class formation.

Absentee landlords comprised mainly of large companies which were based in South Africa and often had some commercial interests in Swaziland, for example in mining. They held large areas of land which lay largely undeveloped, and according to Pim, 'some are undoubtedly holding on in the hope of an appreciation in the price of land, making some money in the meantime by kaffir (sic) farming....'(26)

'Kaffir' farming was a term which seems to have been coined by Lord Selbourne,(27) to describe a tenancy relationship in which big companies owning land in Swaziland (and in South Africa where this phenomenon also occurred)(28) allowed Swazi peasants to remain on their land at an annual rent of a few pounds. Local companies not only charged a rental, but also reserved such pools of labour for future use in the agricultural schemes they initiated. 'It was a tidy scheme....perfectly suited for what the Swaziland Corporation had in mind for its vast farm holdings, cotton production and, later, tobacco.'(29) The ingenuity of such a tenancy relationship was that it forced peasants to enter the labour market - i.e. to sell their labour especially to the mines - in which many of these landowners had financial stakes, whilst securing the companies a steady source of cheap labour at very low prices.

One of Pim's proposals during his visit to Swaziland was the introduction of a land tax to raise revenues for the colonial state. The tax was to be levied upon all white

landowners. It was aimed especially at putting pressure on the companies to invest capital in Swaziland, particularly during the period of the so-called Great Depression. Although there was general resistance to any land taxation by the white settlers, who feared that such a tax would be 'the straw which would break their backs' in the circumstances, there was agreement that companies and absentee landlords (sheep grazers) should be made liable to a tax for non-development of land held within Swaziland. The argument was that 'It is not unreasonable that the owners of an area of 1,142,000 morgen should as such contribute more than a total sum of £518 per annum to the revenue of the country, more especially where much of the larger proportion of this area is held by companies or in large estates belonging for the most part to non-resident owners.'(30)

This particular situation shows that the tenancy farm was not restricted to the conventional landowner-tenant relationship which presupposes direct personal dependency within the context of agricultural production. Instead, the tenancy farm can characterise the direct relationship between monopoly capital and labour. Within the specific material conditions of Southern Africa, monopoly capital entered into a 'backward' relationship with labour through the tenancy farm. By allowing peasants to remain on the land and refusing the payment of rent in kind or through directly appropriated labour-time, the companies initiated the process of proletarianisation without entering into direct commodity relations with the tenants, nor by organising the recruitment and overt

coercion of that labour. Later, when the competition for labour between agriculture and industrial capital intensified, these reserves of labour became very important to the companies, especially with the opening up of the asbestos and coal mines in Swaziland in the 1940s.

The sheep grazers were the second category of absentee landowners, and unlike the companies which were mainly British, the sheep grazers were Boers from the Transvaal who had acquired concessions during the late nineteenth century. According to Pim, 'From the European area of 1,142,306 morgen available for cattle or for cultivation, an area of 418,000 margen has to be deducted held by sheep farmers from the Transvaal who bring approximately 350,000 sheep annually for winter grazing and make no other use of this extensive area including a large proportion of the best high veld grazing in the country.'(31) In 1969, G.W. Whittington and J.B. McIDaniel claimed that 'Forty per cent of the farms in Swaziland, covering thirty five per cent of the total area of individual land tenure holdings, are owned by absentee landlords.'(32)

Besides paying a small 'quit' rent to the Swazi aristocracy, these sheep farmers made no contribution to the Swazi economy. Instead, they not only tended to erode the land by over-grazing during the winter months,(33) but they also extracted labour from those Swazi living on their farms. As indicated in Chapter two, the movement of labour, seasonally, to South African farms, can be traced back to the end of the last century, and as competition for labour with South African mines intensified, Swazi labour became very important to the sheep farmers.

It was common, therefore, for Swazi tenants living on Boer-owned land to have to render labour service on the latters' farms inside South Africa. This relationship was facilitated by the state in both South Africa and Swaziland. One example was that 'In 1923, sheep-dipping tanks were constructed with the assistance of a loan from the Union government for dealing with the 350,000 sheep which come from the Union for winter grazing.'(34) The sheep grazers sold their wool to the Manchester mills in Britain, thereby linking the Swazi peasantry into the imperialist economic system.(35)

No wages were paid to Swazi tenants working on Boer farms in South Africa or Swaziland, and in fact the use of 'family' labour was an even more exploitative form because women and children's labour was treated as part of the male tenants' labour obligations to the white farmer. 'Labour service is based on the payment of labour in kind, hence, on a poor development of commodity economy.'(36) The subsumption of women and children's labour into male labour 'obligations' not only points to low levels of development of commodity production, but more importantly to a trend which has characterised the relationship between labour and capital in agriculture up to the present day. As will be shown in Chapter five, the payment of lower wages to women and the use of unpaid child labour in the production of sugar cane in Swaziland is a clear example of how capital in agriculture resorts to the most backward and most extractive relations to keep the industry profitable.

By 1930, there were an estimated 8,593 Swazi working on South African white farms, an underestimation if one

considers that these people were not formally recruited, most were fulfilling tenant labour obligations, and, most were women because the men were generally recruited for mine work. It is also possible that the figures refer only to men, as women and children were not recognised as individual producers. Therefore, numbers of Swazi in the wattle and sugar plantations - working as unpaid tenants - in Natal especially, were probably much higher than has officially indicated.

Consequently, the complaints levelled against absentee landlords - both companies and sheep farmers - by white settlers in Swaziland, were centred on land and labour. The local white settlers were competing not only with mining capital, but also with white settlers in South African agriculture, whom they saw as 'poaching' Swazi labour. As in the case of mining where the colonial state in Swaziland collaborated with capital in the recruitment of labour, so also with absentee landowners, the colonial state was reluctant to take action in the interests of local settlers with reference to land and labour. White settlers wanted access to the land which lay fallow and which colonialists like Alister Miller wanted to relocate to realise his dream of populating Swaziland with a 'desirable class' of presumably British settlers.

Organisations like the Mushroom Land Settlement Syndicate and the 1820s Settlers' Association, were established in Swaziland to buy farms in order to encourage white settlement. The white immigrants were to be settled in the middleveld. 'It possesses a good climate and soils capable of being built up to a high state of fertility for

arable farming.'[37] The 1920s saw a relatively large influx of whites into the country, and the white population rose from 2,205 in 1921 to 2,800 in 1931. Over the next fifteen years it increased by 45.5 per cent over the 1921 figures, up to 3,204.[38] And in 1967, there were approximately 10,000 whites in Swaziland,[39] owning and controlling just under 50 per cent of the land - the best land. In 1931 Pim had argued that 'The large areas held by non-residents, including sheep farmers, and of some of the ranches have of recent years made settlement difficult if not impossible.'[40] Obviously this was not the case over the next two-three decades, and although the numbers of white settlers have never been very large in comparison to other areas in Southern Africa i.e. South Africa and Zimbabwe - in relative terms ten thousand settlers have had the same effect as two or three times that figure in terms of their dominance of Swaziland economically and politically.

Most of the absentee landlords retained their large farms after independence in 1968, but since the 1970s many have sold out either to multinational companies anxious for arable land or to the neo-colonial regime which in turn has provided multinational capital with land as part of the investment incentives used to lure capital into the country.[41]

The 'Poor Whites'

The social category of 'poor whites' is historically specific to colonial situations where racism colours the process of social differentiation between black and white and within the white population itself. 'Poor whites' are really those elements of the white population who, in the

process of capitalist development, are marginalised and pauperised. They come to form a section of the working class.

It is interesting to note that in the formulation of terms to describe social groups in colonised African societies, a distinction is always made between poor and landless Africans and whites who are poor. One also finds this term used in the southern USA, once again describing a social group who are in fact an emergent section of the American working class.

But in a situation where material poverty is identified with being black and with slavery, whites who are poor are treated as a distinct category. In Southern Africa, poor whites presented the colonial authorities with a problem which was not only economical and social, but also ideological. They were an embarrassment because their poverty contradicted the claim that whites were more intelligent, better achievers and consequently superior to black people i.e. the rationale for colonialism.

Comparing them to 'poor whites' in South Africa, Pim describes them in the following manner, 'Most of those in the Territory (Swaziland - P.M.) are owners of some land, but they are suffering severely from the practice of dividing inheritances and from absolute lack of initiative characteristic of their class. In former times their leisure time would have been occupied in such household tasks as boot making, the preparation of tobacco for the market, and the cutting of yokes and skeys. Modern transport and commercial enterprise now supply their needs and mental apathy prevents them from finding other

activities to occupy their extensive leisure time. They make a living of some kind, hardly above the native (sic) standard, by growing meilies and a little tobacco, but their methods are backward in the extreme and they are much less willing to learn improved methods than the natives (sic). They are tending to the formation of a real pauper class, their large families are under-nourished and most difficult to improve or educate so long as they remain under home influence, while their education is a heavy burden on the resources of a small territory.'(42)

This extensive quotation from Pim says much about the character of the 'poor white' class in Swaziland in the 1930s. This 'problem' had already begun to be resolved in South Africa with the movement of poor whites into the cities and the deliberate creation of jobs and training facilities for them, and of course the institutionalisation of the colour-bar and later Apartheid, to give them a greater advantage over black workers.(43) In Swaziland they received less sympathy from the colonial state, which saw them as a burden on scarce resources, especially as the bulk of poor whites were Boers. The historical hostility between Boer and Briton - each wanting to have a monopoly over the natural resources and labour power of the region and its peoples - expresses itself in this particular case in the denegrading manner used to describe the 'poor whites'. The 1931 Colonial Report had this to say about their housing: '...the poorer European classes, especially those on smallholdings or squatting on large farms belonging to others, live in abject hovels constructed of turf walls, earthen floors

and thatched roofs. The sanitary arrangements are defective and in many cases, non-existent.'[44] Described by Pim as 'unprogressive', these white elements who lived like the Swazi peasantry in many ways, produced only enough for subsistence consumption - mainly maize and legumes - and a bit of tobacco as a limited cash crop.[45]

It is interesting to note that poor whites who were landless also entered into tenancy relations with wealthy white farmers and even 'squatted' on land probably owned by absentee landlords. It is difficult to analyse the precise relations which existed between white tenant/squatters and white landlords, as the above quoted reference is one of the very few instances when this phenomenon is mentioned in Swazi colonial history. But one can assume, on the basis of generalised tenancy relations, that although the racial commonality between landlord and white tenant might have ameliorated the class differences between them, the fundamental landlord-tenant relationship underlaid relations between them.

Most of the 'poor whites' settled in the south of the country during the concessions period, and although initially they appropriated large tracts of land, the practice of subdivision of land soon transformed the majority into smallholders and into landless squatters. They often married Swazi women and lived like 'better-off' Swazi peasants - practicing polygamy and producing large families. Consequently, names like Kemp, Vermaak, Steenkamp, Potgieter, abound in southern Swaziland, although one also finds many Henwoods, Thrings and Bailey's as well. One can often tell from the popularity

of certain names in an area whether it was settled by mainly Boers or British. Generally, the Boers kept their South African citizenship, '....and Afrikaans is the home language of 31 per cent; indeed, in the southern half of Swaziland, 67 per cent of whites speak Afrikaans amongst themselves.'(46)

In terms of tenancy therefore, those poor whites who were landless and entered into tenancy relations with wealthy landlords, either paid a money rent or they rendered services like overseeing Swazi workers on the landlord's farm for which they were unpaid or received a very minimal sum. Share-cropping might also have been another form of rental, although it is very difficult to say definitely what the arrangements were in the absence of records.(47) But we can make out a duality in the tenancy arrangements between the two racial groups. On the one hand, white tenants were treated preferentially by white landlords because politically and ideologically it was necessary to perpetuate the myth of white superiority even in the most obscure manner, while on the other hand, Swazi tenants ' have no rights and are liable to ejectment at any time.'(48)

The offspring of mixed marriages have become known as 'coloureds', and have tended to enjoy a slightly better lifestyle compared to the Swazi majority. This 'privileged' status has had very serious political, economic and social implications for this group within Swazi society, the analysis of which is beyond the scope of this study.

The Emergence of an Agricultural Settler Bourgeoisie in Swaziland 1900 – 1950

In 1952, just over two and a half million acres of land, or 1,108,814 morgen was held by about 500 white settlers, of whom about 40 per cent were 'habitually' absent from the country. According to the Resident Commissioner then, 'It is doubtful if there are more than 200 farmers who are making any use of land, and by far the greater proportion of the acreage is unoccupied and unproductive.'(49)

While on the one hand thousands of Swazi were landless - without access to any land whether on white farms as tenants or on the reserves, and, by 1941 there were 25,000 landless 'peasants' in the country,(50) on the other hand large areas of the country lie idle and unused. Of a total land area of 2,027,205 morgen, the so-called Native Reserves made up a mere 773,948 morgen, to which had been added through the 'buying back' schemes 32,443 morgen by 1930. But, 112,000 morgen remained as Crown land - owned by the colonial state- of which 37,000 morgen was under agreement of sale and 75,000 morgen remained unsold.(51) And yet, by 1940 another 110,000 morgen had been 'purchased' from the colonial state using funds from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund,(52) on behalf of white settlers. Thereby giving them even more access to the land in the country. In fact, the sale of Crown land had been a very important source of revenue for the colonial state, with incoming revenues reaching the peak of £15,663 in 1925 - 1926. Over the twenty years from 1909 - 1932, revenues totalled

£185,385 - all from the sale of land to white settlers only.

Most whites settled in the middle and high veld, which was 'adequate for dry farming of ordinary crops in normal years....' and here too there was a high concentration of Swazi people. Of course the Swazi knew the areas of best land in the country and had occupied them for at least a century before the settlers arrived. Having appropriated the best land, the settlers transformed it into a private property relation, based on Roman-Dutch law 'which embodies the Roman law conception of absolute ownership of land, in contra-distinction to the English law of tenures, where, in theory, all land is held by the Crown. Freeholders, and where the terms of their concessions do not prohibit this, concessionaires, occasionally grant occupation or grazing leases, and in a few instances land is farmed on a crop-share basis.'(53)

But the land was virtually useless without a labour force which was crucial in initiating the process of commodity production and capitalist accumulation. As Earl Grey succinctly put it 'It is essential to establish permanent reserves within the colony, and in siting them to leave sufficient land between them as to allow Europeans to settle there. Under these circumstances every European will be in a position to obtain an adequate number of labourers from the reserve in his direct vicinity.'(54) Although the reserves i.e. so-called Swazi Nation Land, were a source of labour to the emerging capitalist class in agriculture, the main source of labour was located on the white farms in the

form of tenant labour. The tenancy relationship between the emergent white capitalist class i.e. those settlers who had large farms and were actively involved in the production of agricultural commodities for the market - and the Swazi producers, is closest to the 'classic' landlord-tenant relationship as discussed and analysed by Lenin.[55]

The two forms of the tenancy relation i.e. tenancy characterised by continuous bondage wherein the sale of labour power is a subordinate and or non-existent element, and the other form in which the wage is dominant, can be identified in the process of capitalist development in agriculture in Swaziland. Although the process is not as well documented as that which occurred in South Africa, the two stages or phases of tenancy are quite clear.

Over the first fifty years of this century, the transition to capitalist agriculture in Swaziland did entail the transformation of production relations from what could be described as 'labour-service' to waged labour. The analysis by Morris of this transition in South African Agriculture has important relevance for Swaziland and his theoretical propositions are supported by the situation in Swaziland as well. In terms of periodisation of the transition to capitalist agriculture, it is very difficult to pin-point the exact moment of transition in any social formation. As Lenin pointed out '....capitalist economy could not emerge at once, and corvée economy could not disappear at once. The only possible system of economy was accordingly, a transitional

one, a system combining the features of both the corvée and the capitalist system....'[56] Further, that '....it must be observed that sometimes the labour-service system passes into the capitalist system and merges with it to such an extent that it becomes almost impossible to distinguish one from the other. Life creates forms that unite in themselves with remarkable gradualness systems of economy whose basic features constitute opposites. It becomes impossible to say where "labour-service" ends and where "capitalism" begins.'[57]

Therefore, in our analysis of this transition in Swaziland, we shall focus on two factors - the structural constraints to capitalist development and the role of the colonial state in assisting white settlers to overcome them, especially prior to the 1930s, and, the competition for labour between white agriculture and capital located in mining and other industries within Swaziland and in South Africa. This struggle over the access to and control of Swazi labour intensified as commodity relations permeated deeper into the social structure of Swazi society and as the capitalist process 'boomed' in South Africa in the 1920s.

The early 1930s crisis signalled the turning point in the production relations in Swazi agriculture, and in the whole economy generally. The competition for Swazi labour intensified on the one hand, in line with the continuing spread of commodity production, while on the other hand, the differentiation of the peasantry not only fuelled the process of proletarianisation but it also changed the nature of capital-labour relations as well.

Constraints to Capitalist Development in Agriculture

One of the most serious problems facing settler agriculture throughout the colonial period was the lack of capital. 'Their chief difficulty lies, as elsewhere, in obtaining money for development. Most farmers have returned to the land, in the shape of improvements and of stock, any surplus which they have been able to save from their operations, so that no money is left for further development likely to lead to increased revenue.'(58)

As individuals, they were unable to put into motion the process of capitalist accumulation, and until the colonial state stepped in to assist them through various loan and support schemes, the settlers either resorted to subdivision of the land - mainly among the Boers, which invariably led to marginalisation and the creation of 'poor white' elements, or, they sold out and returned to South Africa. Those who persisted received financial assistance from the colonial state mainly through the Land and Agricultural Loan Fund. 'This fund was constituted under provisions of Proclamation No. 34 of 1929 as amended by Proclamations No. 13 of 1930 and No. 7 of 1931. The last makes provision for advances to Co-operative Agricultural Societies and Companies. The Fund was intended to serve much the same purposes as the Union Land Bank (of South Africa - P.M.), and advances could be made for improvements such as fencing, water conservation, dipping tanks etc. the purchase of stock or plant, the discharge of existing liabilities, and similar purposes considered to be of definite advantage to the Territory including the financing of Co-operative Agricultural

Societies or Companies.'(59)

The loans were made on easy terms, to be repaid in half-yearly instalments covering periods of between three and fifteen years, depending on the size of the loan. Although much less money than had been anticipated was actually available from the fund, it was nevertheless an important prop to commodity agriculture as it provided a badly needed financial base.

In addition to direct financial assistance through the fund, the settlers also received financial grants through their agricultural co-operatives. For example, the Swaziland Co-operative Tobacco Company Limited received £12,000 'including £10,000 seasonal loan and £2,000 for building and equipment'.(60) As early as 1910, the Agricultural Society of Bremersdorp (now Manzini) had been formed, to cater for the interests of those settlers involved in the production of maize and tobacco. According to Pim, 'The cultivation of tobacco had commenced in the south along the Transvaal border before the Boer War and spread to a small extent in later years.'(61) Although it never became a major crop, tobacco was one of the earliest cash crops to be grown in Swaziland, and it was produced mainly by 'poor whites' in the south of the country, who relied heavily on family labour. The Swazi peasants also produced the crop, but as they did not have access to the market until much later, what they produced was for personal consumption.

In the 1920s, the Mushroom Syndicate and the Returned Soldiers (WWI) Settlement Schemes were additional organisations formed by the settlers to stimulate capitalist

development. These also received assistance from the colonial state, as did companies like the Swaziland Corporation headed by Miller,[62] who formed the Ubombo Ranches company in the east of the country, which today is one of the three sugar processing industries.

Access to capital remained a persistent problem for the emerging capitalist class well into the post WWII period, and many settlers were made bankrupt by the 1930s crisis. To ensure some success of white settlement, the colonial state provided additional assistance in the form of infrastructural development. Huge sums of money were spent on developing roads, bridges and putting up fences and constructing dams and dipping tanks. 'Between 1919 and 1927 some progress was made in improving the roads, including primitive causeways in 1925, a commencement of bridging in 1926-1927, the installation of a pont on the Usutu, and the gradual increase of telephones.'[63] In the proposed eight year development plan for 1948-1956, the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund was created to continue assisting the settlers and especially catering for the needs of multinational capital. 'Under Scheme D. 1725 a grant of £42,000 was approved for the development of road communication in Swaziland. The Scheme as embodied in the Memorandum C.D.W. (D) No. 2227 provided for the development of six routes on which improvement was judged to be most badly needed.'[64]

The development of an infrastructure which included the construction of dipping tanks and a subsidiary road network giving easier access to white settlers, shows very clearly how the colonial state was essentially a

means by which the colonialists could advance their interests. The colonial state had a clearly stated policy of assisting the settlers in every way possible, as long as the interests of the settlers did not clash with those of the state.(65) Therefore, whilst on the one hand a sound infrastructure was essential for commodity production to expand, on the other hand, the development of capitalist production would serve the interests of all the colonial classes.

Of significant importance to the 'take-off' of capitalist agriculture was the existence of a reasonably efficient road transport system. It was only in 1928 that the Road Motor Service between Swaziland and South Africa began 'marking an epoch in the development of the country'.(60) To minimise transport costs to the settlers, the colonial state entered into a sort of 'deal' with the Motor Service whereby the latter provided white farmers with a relatively cheap and convenient service for their commodities in return for the non-payment of income tax or licence fees. In fact, Pim was very open about the assistance being given to the settlers. 'The declared policy of the Administration is to quote as low rates as possible for agricultural traffic; when it is possible for the farmers to bring into Swaziland (from South Africa - P.M.) traffic as fertilisers simultaneously with the exports of agricultural produce, special truck-load rates are quoted.

It is also its declared policy to convey goods direct from the farms off the recognised routes at specially reduced truck-load rates so obviating the provision of transport facilities. This policy is in fact

carried out in practice and there is general recognition of the willingness of the management to meet as far as possible all reasonable requests from representative bodies and from individual farmers for special facilities which would tend to increase traffic.'(67)

Linked to the transportation system was the question of markets. Once transport had been established in the 1920s, the next problem was to assure access to the South African markets. The structural integration of Swaziland into the South African economy was initiated through the Customs Union Agreement in 1910.(68) Ever since, South African capital has exercised a hegemonic influence over Swaziland as a market and as a source of profits, in competition with British capital.(69)

The market within Swaziland was limited by the size of the country and its small population - only 123,320 in 1930 -; the low wages paid to workers and the huge outflows of migrants to South Africa; limited commodity production in relation to South Africa, and by the strong competition with South Africa for cheap labour. Furthermore, South Africa could limit access to its markets by imposing restrictions and or quotas on certain products from Swaziland when these threatened - or were perceived to be a threat - to the interests of white South African farmers, as was the case in the 1920s. 'In 1924 the South African government, anxious to protect its farmers from competition and even more anxious to obtain labour for the gold mines, imposed a heavy weight embargo on cattle imports which allowed only the best Swazi stock to enter the Union.'(70) Although this action did affect

white farmers in Swaziland to some extent, it was mainly at those Swazi peasants who were taking advantage of the South African market to sell their cattle at better prices, thereby avoiding recruitment into waged labour. The restrictions on cattle imports from Swaziland were later removed, and cattle sales were as high as 8,620,000 by 1936,[71] by then the momentum of proletarianisation had been well entrenched in the region.

Although the settlers demanded an extension of the transport system through the construction of a rail link with South Africa, this was turned down by the colonial state on the grounds that 'So long as the main market of Swaziland lies in the Union any railway constructed in the Territory must be either a branch line to the Union main line or part of a Union line of through communication.'[72] Later, when a rail-link was made with South Africa and with the port of Lorenco Marques (now Maputo), it not only served to strengthen South Africa's hegemonic control over the transportation system between the two countries, but it also opened up the Swazi market to more efficient monopolisation by South African goods. The integration of the countries of the region into an infrastructural network which is controlled and directed by South Africa has had very serious consequences for the states concerned. South Africa's domination of the region enables it to exercise several forms of economic and military action against states in the region if and when it feels threatened by the policies of these states. The recent economic blockade of Lesotho and the military raids into Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as into

Swaziland, are facilitated by the structural and economic weapons which South Africa can wield against these countries. In terms of the movement of commodities, reliance upon South Africa for marketing and port facilities has meant a certain degree of compromise on the part of countries like Swaziland and Zimbabwe.(73)

But, as far as the white settlers were concerned in the 1920s and 1930s, a good infrastructure was vital to their development as a capitalist class. Therefore, although Pim accepted that 'The relatively heavy costs of motor transport both forthe export of the fruit and the import of boxes and other requisites is a handicap reducing the margin of profit, but in considering the possibilities of development the crucial question is that of markets',(74) access to markets within South Africa and abroad was inextricably bound with efficient and cheap transportation. As the domestic Swazi market was severely limited for reason given above, the export market was the only viable alternative. Through collaboration with South African companies, white settlers in Swaziland were able to gain entry into the local and regional market as well as foreign markets. For example, the citrus industry in Swaziland is totally dependent upon South African marketing boards for the sale of fruit, and the same applies to a wide range of Swazi products.(75)

Finally, natural constraints were a major hazard facing white settlers, especially as they were initially dependent on natural rainfall. Although they had occupied the best land in terms of both arable farming and cattle ranching without irrigation they could not expand production beyond

dry-land cropping. Crops like tobacco and cotton were cultivatable on dry land, but sugar cane, citrus and pineapples required irrigation. Although a few private schemes were started in the 1920s, these were very limited and did not give the required boost to commodity expansion.

It was only in the post WWII period that large scale irrigation projects were undertaken by the colonial state, specifically aimed at encouraging commodity development by large companies. United Plantation, a company involved in timber, was to be a major beneficiary of an important irrigation scheme to harness the waters of the Great Usutu river, as was shown in the proposed eight year development plan for 1948 - 1956. 'That irrigated agriculture in Swaziland is a profitable venture is already acknowledged and large areas in the valley of the Great Usutu can be submitted to irrigation.'(76) Referring to the proposed scheme, which would also have important hydro-electrical potential, the Plan further argues that '....this water could be very economically diverted by canals onto the Lebombo Flats to irrigate some 200,000 acres of land. This land is, we understand, ideal for the growing of sugar.'(77) But until this was achieved, dependence upon natural rainfall meant unpredictability of crop yields and lower rates of surplus accumulation, especially during bad seasons when little or no rain fell.

As Morris puts it; 'Even had the best social and structural conditions possible prevailed, natural conditions themselves would have made the rapid advancement of capitalist agriculture extremely difficult.

Drought, locusts and disease in alternating ferocity swept periodically across the countryside; and major price fluctuations seemed to be waiting in the wings to claim the devil's due from any who escaped the plagues unscathed.'(78) Coupled with backward technology and the generally low levels of productivity, white agriculture in pre-WWII Swaziland can be described as commodity agriculture but not necessarily as capitalist agriculture.

Transition to Capitalist Agriculture

The transition to capitalist agriculture is marked by the so-called Great Depression and the emergence of 'free' waged labour on white farms. Until then, labour tenancy assumed the form of labour-service; '....under labour-service....the prices paid for labour are usually less than half those under capitalist hire....But the difference between free and "semi-free" labour is far from exhausted by the difference in pay. Of enormous importance also is the circumstance that the latter form of labour always presupposes the personal dependence of the one hired upon the one who hires him, it always presupposes the greater or lesser retention of "other than economic pressure".'(79)

The 1930s crisis acted as a catalyst for the emergence of a white capitalist class in agriculture in Swaziland because it forced the least competitive elements out of production and served to concentrate finances and state assistance among a very small number of settlers. In his report, Pim argued that the Territory '....contains amongst the farmers a strong progressive (sic) element who are not prepared to sit still in bad times....With funds for

development along approved lines, and....improved transport for cattle and a lowering of road transport rates, the European community can with confidence be left to develop the main part of the Territory occupied by them.'(80)

One of the clearest indicators of the transition was an intensification of the competition for labour which had important consequences not only for the character of agriculture but also for the process of proletarianisation and class struggle. From the very beginning of colonial domination, the battle over the control of African labour in Southern Africa was central to the process of surplus accumulation. Without labour, capital could not set in motion the processes of surplus production and profit accumulation. And, although labour was abundant and cheap by the beginning of this century, it was not simply a matter of the white settlers 'helping themselves' to a pool of cheap labour. The laws of capitalist competition invariably came into play, and the competition for African labour intensified within Swaziland and between Swaziland and South Africa as commodity relations became more dominant and multinational capital expanded into timber, citrus and mining.

As early as 1910, A. Miller had complained bitterly about the 'batallion of recruiters from South Africa'(81) who were offering better wages to Swazi peasants as part of the huge recruitment drive by the mines for foreign labour. Land alienation and all the other mechanisms of labour extraction discussed in the previous chapter (three), had set in motion the process of proletarianisation and

initiated a bitter struggle not only between labour and capital but also between the various capitalists. Backed by capital raised on the European markets, the mining industry had no financial problems. What they needed urgently in the first few decades was abundant and cheap labour, and they went out in search of such labour across Southern Africa. But those colonial elements located in agriculture in both Swaziland and South Africa, had a much more difficult task raising finances, and were all the more desparate to 'hold onto' the labour resident on their farms. In the case of Swaziland in particular, where there were no rich pickings from large mineral resources, it was make or break for the white settlers. 'The individual owner....with a limited capital from the beginning, realises that for years to come he has got to find money from sources outside his cattle and sets about to obtain revenue from cropping', and, 'capital in cattle is, in the end, to the European farmer much as it is to the native (sic) a readily realisable asset....'(82)

In the circumstances, white farmers in Swaziland tried various means of keeping labour on their farms. Many did not expel all the Swazi peasants at the end of the so-called 'five year period' in 1915, but instead 'insisted on written contracts with tenants, which placed the latter under provisions of the Master and Servants Law (Transvaal Law No. 13 of 1880 in force in Swaziland until 1961) which provided harsh penalties for infractions.'(83) In addition to proposing a two month notice period for all squatters, 'A measure was adopted

preventing attestation for labour outside Swaziland of any male whose tax receipt was endorsed as employed by a local enterprise.'(84)

Despite pleas to the colonial state for effective measures to curb the flow of labour out of Swaziland, the state found it more advantageous to cater for the labour needs of South African enterprises, especially the gold mines, than for those of local white farmers. Instead, the colonial state turned a 'blind eye' to the recruitment by white farmers of illegal migrants - especially women migrants - from what was then the Portuguese colony of Mozambique. This practice was a violation of the 1909 Mozambique Labour Convention according to which South Africa had a monopoly over the recruitment of Mozambican labour. These migrants were 'illegally' in Swaziland, and therefore were probably treated very badly and paid mainly in kind. To escape the vicious Portuguese colonialists who treated Mozambicans as slaves,(85) women migrants crossed over into Swaziland to be 'employed' mainly in picking cotton and tobacco. The seasonality of the crops confirms the argument that the migrants too were seasonal workers. Later in the 1960s, Mozambican labour came to play a crucial role in the development of the sugar industry in Swaziland.(86)

What is most interesting about this particular phenomenon is that once again we see how women tend to experience the most backward and most extractive forms of exploitation. Their relationship with the white farmer was characterised not only by their dependence upon the

farmer for work and security (i.e. he could report their presence to the police if they did not co-operate), but because of their 'illegal' status, they were especially vulnerable to excessive exploitation and abuse. Unfortunately once again this aspect of Swazi history is poorly recorded, and one must depend upon the statements of the colonialists who saw the women merely as 'raw hands to pick cotton'.[87] Female seasonal labour within capitalist agriculture in Swaziland does not therefore begin with large-scale commodity production. Instead, it begins as early as 1907. This flow of 'clandestine' labour continued into Swaziland until the 1960s when local labour began to satisfy labour demands especially in the sugar industry.

Locally, white farmers used the labour of Swazi women and children very extensively in crop production, especially in the weeding and picking of cotton, and complaints about shortages of female labour persist throughout the 1920s. For example, the 1928 Colonial Report states that 'A few farmers, who grow cotton fairly, experienced a little difficulty in engaging a sufficient number of native (sic) women and girls for cotton-picking at the required time.'[88]

These complaints point to two very important trends which are often neglected by those who study the social history of Swaziland. First of all, women were not only engaged in subsistence production in addition to 'reproductive work within the household, but they were also engaged in commodity production on white farms. Secondly, what this means is that women were directly integrated

into the circuit of commodity agriculture, and in fact their labour provided the basis upon which white agriculture could transform itself into capitalist agriculture. 'Indeed the striking feature of the commoditisation of African peasant economy, as it occurred historically, is its extreme uneveness both between social formations and within them (regional differentiation). This uneveness is tied to the concrete conditions in which various capitals confront and penetrate different pre-capitalist formations, and is therefore not susceptible to general theoretical formulation. On the other hand, concepts which help distinguish the forms and extent of commoditisation can contribute to the analysis of social formations in their specificity.'(89)

In the case of Swaziland, white farmers used female and child labour because it was largely unpaid and not considered 'waged' labour. This was important to the settlers, especially just before and during the 1930s crisis, because they could barely afford to pay wages, let alone increase wage rates. 'It is unfortunately quite true that farming is at present (1931/32) in a very depressed condition and that it is very difficult to export at a profit, partly on account of the general fall in prices and partly on account of the special difficulties of exchange.'(90) In the competition with South African and local companies, white farmers were no match in terms of wages offered.(91) In fact, according to the Colonial Report of 1932, 'The rates of wages for native [sic] labour varied from 15s to £2 per

month, depending on their age and efficiency...'[92] Agricultural workers put in an average of sixty hours a week, compared to forty eight hours for construction workers and fifty hours for workers in the mining industry. The cost of living of African workers was set at 8s per month while that of whites was set at £10 for single men and £14 per month for married men.[93] It is interesting to note that Black workers were treated as single persons, whether they were married or unmarried. In some cases, white workers received 'a share in the crops, estimated to be the value of £40 to £80 per annum. Others are provided with food and quarters'.[94]

Therefore, one may assume that although the bulk of the weeding and harvesting on white farms was done by women and children, the statistics on numbers of Swazi workers estimated at 3,000 in 1933, were reflecting only male workers. This 'invisibility' of women in the development of commodity agriculture in Swaziland persisted throughout the colonial period, and even after independence, the employment statistics still do not reflect all workers engaged in commodity production in agriculture, the bulk of whom are seasonal female workers.

One can argue further that the labour of women and children on white farms during the depression and soon after was crucial in the survival of white agriculture during this period. Faced with the problem of out-migration by male labour; the collapse in the price of agricultural commodities and an inability to compete effectively with South African labour recruiters and local industries, white farmers were dependent increasingly on female and

child labour. That is why they made a petition to the colonial state to deny 'travelling passes to work seekers under age 18'.[95] This petition was a clear reflection of the labour shortage crisis facing white farmers at the height of the depression.

Therefore, we can see that on the one hand the colonial state actively assisted white farmers through loans and infrastructural development throughout the colonial period, whilst on the other hand, the settlers had to resolve the labour problem largely on their own because migrant labour to South Africa and into large-scale commodity agriculture locally was more profitable for the administration. In the post WWII period as the South African economy boomed and multinational capital became increasingly dominant within the Swazi economy, competition for Swazi labour reached its peak. The expansion of large-scale agriculture provided Swazi workers with a local 'alternative' to farm work, thereby intensifying the competition between settler farmers on the one hand and other capitals on the other.

One of the main effects of the movement of labour out of white farms, was that the settlers had to resort increasingly to mechanisation and to paid labour.

'....[O] n the one hand, capitalism is the factor giving rise to and extending the use of machines in agriculture; on the other, the application of machinery to agriculture is of a capitalist character, i.e. it leads to the establishment of capitalist relations and their further development.'[96] And, in terms of the changing character of the labour force, labour mobility (mainly male) out of

settler agriculture was a clear indication of the process of differentiation among the peasants as commodity producers.

On the other hand, labour tenants were increasingly transformed into waged workers by the need for agriculture to be competitive, because although labour-service had been cheaper for the white farmers, it did not ensure that labour would be available. 'The struggle in capitalist agriculture concerned both the extraction of surplus value from labour tenants and the necessity of farmers to re-organise the productive forces.'(97) Labour mobility became an expression of class consciousness and class struggle.(98)

One of the most recent studies on this period has been undertaken by A. Booth, who looks at the competition for labour by the various capitalist elements in Swaziland. Unfortunately, Booth poses the struggle between labour and capital as one determined only by capital. Swazi workers merely react to circumstances created by white farmers, multinational capital and the colonial state, and Booth does not even attempt a class analysis. He uses class concepts but there is no recognition of class struggle and Swazi workers are posed as objects of competition who try to 'beat the system' by taking advantage of labour shortages. 'Swazi workers also figured out how to play the "advance game" deftly, by soliciting the £5 advance from one timber company after another, deserting after a day's work at each, working the sugar estates on the lowveld in the same manner before skipping off to Johannesburg with the NRC.'(99) Even the expressions Booth

uses are indicative of his liberalism and rather patronising attitude towards the subjects of his study, an attitude which unfortunately, or fortunately, is not disguised by the use of 'Marxist' concepts like 'British Capital'; 'consciousness' etc.

For Booth, it was a matter of playing the market, and his analysis degenerates into a description of 'labour market forces' determined by capital and the colonial state. In the final analysis, although he does make some very important points in his study, his argument is basically that worker resistance in Swaziland is really 'labour market consciousness' and not class consciousness or its expression.

We would like to argue that in fact labour plays as vital a role, if not more vital, in the creation and transformation of social conditions in any society, because after all, labour is the source of value, the engine of social production. Therefore, even if the forms of struggle appear to be a manipulation of market forces, the real struggle underlying them is the fundamental contradiction over the ownership and control of the means of production and surplus value. It is this struggle which runs through all colonial history and which still persists in Swazi society to the present day. The emergent working class was resisting against a socio-economic system which not only had robbed them of their land and its resources, but which also sought to exploit them and oppress them. Therefore, it is important to present these early forms of resistance for what they truly are - expressions of an emerging working class consciousness which later

expressed itself more clearly in the strikes of the 1960s and 1970s.[100]

In the case of South Africa, Morris argues that 'The strong support accorded to the landlord class by the state was used to maintain the political and economic subservience of the peasants to the landlord class while the estate was transformed into a capitalist enterprise. Feudal bondage was transformed into capitalist relations of production but on the basis of the strongly entrenched labour service bondage system, with many of the legal forms of feudal land ownership being maintained.'[101] In Swaziland, the settlers did not receive overt or direct support from the colonial state on the matter of labour control, although the state did sanction the actions taken by white settlers in this regard. Besides pressurising the state to discourage mine recruiters, 'They urged it to enforce that section of the Master and Servants Law which made offering higher wages and benefits a criminal offence.'[102] To male workers who signed up with the mine recruiters, the white settlers took the law into their own hands. 'They warned their farm workers that if they took up mining employment, their families would be "victimised" in their absence. They mis-endorsed passes, preventing their men from being attested at the border. They shanghaied hitchikers by day, and they crossed borders and "poached" labour in the dead of night.'[103]

These actions by white settlers show two things; one, that labour participated directly and crucially in the transition to capitalist agriculture not only by producing surplus value but by 'opting' for mine work,

thereby intensifying the labour crisis on white farms. And two, that women remained within the labour-service relationship, providing labour time and producing commodities for white farmers. Although many women left the white farms and reserves,[104] the bulk of the female labour force remained on the land, engaged in subsistence production alongside the production of commodities like cotton and tobacco on white farms.

Therefore, in the post WWII period, white agriculture was faced with two options - either to intensify production through the introduction of machinery, investment of more capital, and an efficient labour force, with assistance from the colonial state of course, or, to collaborate with mining and industrial capital in the development of agribusiness concerns in timber, ranching, citrus and sugar, and thereby have greater power in the control of African labour. Some white elements did opt for the latter course of action, and individuals like Mr Carl Todd became powerful political and economic figures in the country. As a member of the European Advisory Council, which 'has always been a highly conservative body, reflecting the strong South African sympathies and connections of most Swaziland whites',[105] Mr Todd used the EAC as a means of realising his political and economic objectives. Halperndescribed him thus in 1965 'Mr Carl Todd....is a senior partner in a leading Johannesburg law firm and a director of over thirty South African companies, including major enterprises like African Explosives and Chemical Industries Ltd. (part of the Anglo-American group and connected with Imperial Chemical Industries], the

American-South African Investment Co. Ltd., the Netherlands Bank of South Africa Ltd., and the National Industrial Credit Corporation Ltd.'[106] His business interests have grown even more extensively since the late 1960s, and his involvement in agribusiness in the country is of particular interest to us. Several other white farmers realised themselves as capitalists through collaboration with British and South African capital, and in this way were able to withstand the economic and social crisis of the 1970s and 1980s.

But other white farmers preferred to 'go it alone' especially after independence in 1968, producing cotton and maize and engaging in ranching. They continued to demand improved transport facilities as the Swaziland Livestock and Agricultural Department Report of 1949 shows; 'The lack of rail transport affects adversely the producer of crops which have to be delivered for internal consumption or export. This is probably the most important factor preventing farmers from producing exportable products for sale in competitive or controlled markets.'[107] Although they survived as part of the capitalist class well into the post-independence period, the recent crisis of production has seen many white farmers bankrupted and sell up to return to South Africa. The Swaziland Government has bought most of their farms, thereby 'theoretically' increasing the acreage under Swazi Nation Land (SNL), but in practice, most of the good land has either been given over to multinationals for the production of commodities like sugar, or, the farms have been taken over by corrupt government officials and 'princes'.

Conclusion

Therefore, we can conclude with the argument that not only were there very clear class differences amongst white settlers, an agricultural capitalist class does not emerge until the 1930s, and especially after WWII. And even then, it is a small and fragile class, relying to a large extent upon the legal, economic and political support of the colonial state. The emergence of waged labour on white farms (although tenancy has persisted to the present); the increased mechanisation of production and use of fertilisers, all point towards increased levels of production among capitalist farmers. For example, in 1930, white farmers owned 363 wagons and trolleys (while Swazi peasants owned 148 wagons, having increased the number by 75 between 1921 and 1930); 14 tractors, and 901 ploughs compared to 686 in 1921.(108) The production of cotton and tobacco rose from 430,000 pounds (weight) and 250,000 pounds in 1925 respectively, to 750,000 and 341,005 respectively in 1932. In fact, during the years 1929 - 1931, cotton production had peaked at over 3 million pounds in weight, while tobacco had reached above the million mark in 1927, 1928 and 1929.(109) Although productivity levels dropped quite dramatically before and remained quite low up till the 1950s (see Table on exports from 1924 - 1950), they soon recovered in the 1960s. Increasingly cotton became a peasant produced crop, covering 17,709 hectares of Swazi Nation Land and becoming the second largest crop after maize - which covered 71,145 hectares in 1978/1979.(110)

The penetration of commodity relations into peasant

agriculture in Swaziland is an important and yet unresearched area. Certainly several studies have been made by 'experts', in the attempt to find ways of increasing commodity production within peasant households,[111] but a serious class analysis of the consequences of commodity relations on subsistence agriculture has yet to be undertaken. Unfortunately, this topic falls beyond the immediate scope of this particular work and therefore must remain a project for future research.

Notes

(1) Cohen, R., Gutkind, P.C.W. and Brazier, P. (ed) Peasants and Proletarians: The Struggles of Third World Workers, 1979, Monthly Review Press, New York, p. 11.

(2) Lenin, V.I. Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, 1933, Martin Lawrence, London.

(3) Kozlov, G.A. (ed) Political Economy: Capitalism, 1977, Progress Publications, Moscow, p. 266.

(4) Lenin, V.I. Capitalism and Agriculture, 1946, International Publishers, New York, p. 48.

(5) Morris, M.L. 'The development of capitalism in South African agriculture: class struggle in the countryside', Economy and Society, vol. 5, no. 3, 1976, p. 296.

(6) Ibid. p. 300 (In his brilliant analysis of the character and role of labour tenancy in the development of capitalism in South African agriculture, Morris brings out the various factors - historical, economic, political, social and ecological - which have shaped the industry).

(7) Lenin, V.I. The Development of Capitalism in Russia, 1964, Lawrence and Wishart, London, p. 178.

(8) Pim, A.W. The Financial and Economic Situation of Swaziland (hereafter, The Pim Report), HMSO, London, 1932.

(9) Morris, M.L. op. cit.; see also Keegan, T. 'The Share-Cropping Economy and African Class formation in the Highveld Maize Belt of South Africa', 1980 - for publication in Town and

Countryside: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness in South Africa, ca 1870-1930 (ed) Marks, S. and Atmore, A., Longmans, 1981.

(10) The transition to 'free' wage labour is discussed in this chapter.

(11) The most recent of such studies is by Davies, R.H., O'Meara, D., and Dlamini, S. The Kingdom of Swaziland: a Profile, 1985, Zed Books Limited, London.

(12) Morris, M.L. op. cit.

(13) Lenin, V.I. Capitalism and Agriculture, op. cit. p. 26.

(14) Ibid. p. 55.

(15) Booth, A. 'The Development of the Swazi Labour Market 1900-1968', in The South African Labour Bulletin, vol. 7, no. 6, April, 1982. Also 'Notes on the early history of Labour migration in Swaziland', University College of Swaziland, (unpublished); Fransman, M. 'Labour, Capital and the State in Swaziland, 1962-1977', in SALB, vol. 7, no. 6, 1982.

(16) Fransman, M. and Levin, J. have concentrated on a more in-depth analysis of post WWII agriculture and class formation.

(17) Nzula, A. et al Forced Labour in Colonial Africa, p. 17.

(18) Lenin, V.I. Capitalism and Agriculture, op. cit. p. 14.

(19) Morris, M.L. op. cit. p. 294.

(20) Ibid. p. 294.

(21) Quoted in Booth, A. 'The Development of the Swazi

Labour Market'. op. cit. p. 40.

(22) Booth, A. op. cit. p. 42.

(23) The Pim Report, p. 14.

(24) Ibid. p. 15.

(25) See Daniel, J. 'The Political Economy of Colonial and Post-Colonial Swaziland', in SALB, vol. 7, no. 6, 1982; also, Davies, R.H., O'Meara, D. and Dlamini, S. op. cit.; and Halpern, J. South Africa's Hostages, 1965, Penguin Books, London.

(26) The Pim Report, p. 22.

(27) Booth, A. op. cit. p. 42.

(28) Morris, M.L. op. cit. pp. 333-335.

(29) Booth, A. op. cit. pp. 42-43.

(30) The Pim Report, p. 31.

(31) Ibid. p. 7.

(32) Whittington, G.W. and McIDaniel, J.B. 'Problems of land tenure and ownership in Swaziland', in Environment and Land Use in Africa, (ed) Thomas, M.F. and Whittington, G.W. 1969, Methuen, London.

(33) Halpern, J. op. cit. p. 338.

(34) The Pim Report, p. 69.

(35) Nzula, A. et al, op. cit.

(36) Lenin, V.I. Development of Capitalism in Russia, op. cit. p. 186.

(37) The Pim Report, p. 102.

(38) Colonial Reports, 1921, 1931 and 1947, HMSO, London.

(39) Halpern, J. op. cit. p. 339.

(40) The Pim Report, p. 101.

(41) The Sugar Industry, especially the third mill, at Simunye, has benefited greatly from such incentives.

(42) The Pim Report, p. 14.

(43) Check with Robin for references on 'poor whites' in South Africa.

(44) Colonial Report, 1931.

(45) The Pim Report, op. cit.

(46) Halpern, J. op. cit. p. 339.

(47) Scattered throughout the Colonial Reports are implied references to such arrangements. On a more personal level, the writer's grandparents, for example, were tenants of a big landlord - a Mr Henwood. He and his brothers owned large tracts of land in the Hluti area in Southern Swaziland, and they 'leased' land out to 'coloured' families, i.e. racially mixed families usually comprising of white fathers and African mothers.

(48) The Pim Report, p. 22.

(49) Memorandum on Land Tax by the Resident Commissioner, 1932 (appendix IV in Pim Report), p. 121.

(50) Scott, P. 'Land Policy and the Native Population in Swaziland', in Geographical Journal, vol. 117, 1951.

(51) Memorandum on Land Tax, op. cit. p. 121.

(52) Scott, P. op. cit.

(53) Colonial Reports, 1954, p. 15.

(54) Cited in Nzula, A. et al, op. cit. p. 56.

(55) Lenin, V.I. The Development of Capitalism in

Russia, op. cit.

(56) Ibid. p. 194.

(57) Ibid. p. 197.

(58) The Pim Report, p. 97.

(59) Ibid. p. 77.

(60) Ibid. p. 78.

(61) Ibid. p. 12.

(62) Booth, A. op. cit.

(63) The Pim Report, p. 51.

(64) Swaziland: Eight Year Development Plan, 1st April, 1948 - 31st March, 1956. The Secretariat Mbabane, Swaziland, 17th February, 1953, p. 58.

(65) The question of labour was a major point of contention between the colonial state and the emerging white capitalists. It was more profitable for the colonial state, in terms of tax returns, when labour went to South Africa, especially to the mines, which paid slightly better wages.

(66) The Pim Report, p. 51.

(67) Ibid. pp. 74-75.

(68) Kowet, K.D. Land, Labour Migration and Politics in Southern Africa: Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, 1978, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden, and Scott, P. op. cit.

(69) Daniel, J. op. cit.

(70) Scott, P. op. cit. p. 440.

(71) Colonial Report, 1936.

(72) The Pim Report, p. 76.

(73) The SADCC was set up to promote alternative

economic (and political) structures for the countries of the region, to decrease dependence on South Africa.

(74) The Pim Report, p. 88.

(75) The South African Citrus Marketing Board determines the prices of citrus fruits and its marketing.

(76) Swaziland: Eight Year Development Plan 1948-1956, op. cit. p. 69.

(77) Ibid. p. 76.

(78) Morris, M.L. op. cit. p. 314.

(79) Lenin, V.I. Development of Capitalism in Russia, op. cit. pp. 202-203.

(80) The Pim Report, p. 96.

(81) Booth, A. op. cit. p. 43.

(82) The Pim Report, p. 94.

(83) Booth, A. op. cit. p. 43.

(84) Ibid. p. 43.

(85) First, R. Black Gold: The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian or Peasant, Brighton, Harvester Press, 1983.

(86) Will be discussed in Chapter five. They brought with them the skills of cane cutting from the older established sugar industry in Mozambique.

(87) Cited in Booth, A. op. cit. p. 43.

(88) Colonial Report, 1928, p. 11.

(89) Bernstein, H. 'Notes on Capital and Peasantry', ROAPE, no. 10, 1977, p. 62.

(90) The Pim Report, p. 31.

(91) Booth, A. op. cit. p. 46.

(92) Colonial Report, 1932, p. 25.

(93) Ibid. 1932.

(94) Colonial Report, 1932, p. 25.

(95) Booth, A. p. 43.

(96) Lenin, V.I. Development of Capitalism in Russia, op. cit. p. 228.

(97) Morris, M.L. op. cit. p. 319.

(98) Van Onselen, C. Chibaro - African Mini Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1933, Pluto Press, 1976, London. Also 'Worker Consciousness in Black Miners, Southern Rhodesia 1900-1920', in Peasants and Proletarians (eds) R. Cohen, P.C.W. Gutkind, and P. Brazier, Monthly Review Press, 1979, London.

(99) Booth, A. op. cit. p. 50.

(100) Fransman, M. The State and Development in Swaziland 1960-1977, Ph.D. Thesis, 1978, University of Sussex.

(101) Morris, M.L. op. cit. p. 310.

(102) Booth, A. op. cit. p. 48.

(103) Ibid. p. 48.

(104) We showed this in Chapter three and Morris says the same for South Africa in his article.

(105) Halpern, J. op. cit. p. 339.

(106) Ibid. p. 339.

(107) Swaziland Livestock and Agricultural Department Report, 1948, Mbabane, Swaziland, p. 8.

(108) Colonial Report, 1930.

(109) Colonial Reports, 1927-1932.

(110) Swaziland Government, Annual Survey of Swazi Nation Land, Central Statistical Office, Mbane,

Swaziland.

(111) Low, A. Farm - Household Theory and Rural Development in Swaziland, Development Study no. 23, University of Reading, 1982.

Chapter Five

The Sugar Industry in Swaziland

In the preceding chapter (4), we saw the development of commodity agriculture and the emergence of a settler class in Swaziland. Due to the inadequacy of empirical data about waged workers in white agriculture, it was difficult to discuss fully the size, character or specific relationship between waged rural workers and white farmers.

In this chapter, we will focus on the development of a proletariat within the agro-industries, in the sugar industry. Our contention is that the process of proletarianisation is an expression of the existence, on the one hand, of finance capital as multinational capital, operating within the wider global context of developed capitalist relations of production and technology, and on the other hand, the social, political and cultural transformation of a section of the society - in this case Swazi producers - into a new and dynamic social force. Munslow defines proletarianisation thus; 'Proletarianisation refers to the increasingly necessary character of indigenous participation in the labour market and the closing off over time of alternatives. It also involves increases in the numbers of wage earners, the length of time spent in employment and the percentage of total income derived from wages.'(1) And we would add that it is within the relationship of surplus extraction and oppression that the essence of proletarianisation lies.

The character and manifestation of this process is shaped and coloured by the types of capital involved and,

by the historical and specific realities of those who are active participants in it. As Mintz puts it '...we can derive some sense of the processes of proletarianisation ...by viewing the ways in which non-proletarians become assimilated to large-scale agricultural production of a capitalist kind in this situation. In discovering the ways that this assimilation occurs, we may also help to reveal the similarities and differences between the processes Marx described and those that occurred, and continue to occur in the agricultural capitalism of the colonial and neocolonial world.'(2)

Therefore, while capitalist relations were slowly emerging within white settler commodity agriculture in Swaziland leading to the gradual transformation of peasant tenant producers into rural wage workers, agro-industry seems to have provided the appropriate context for the rapid emergence of an advanced proletariat, which was asserting itself as a political force by the 1960s(3). The relationship between subsistence producers and agricultural workers or rural proletarians(4) will be discussed more fully later, in terms of the reproduction of cheap labour and the repression and socio-ideological control of workers by multinational capital and the Swazi state.

It is appropriate at this point to clarify a few of the concepts which we shall be using in our analysis of proletarianisation in the agro-industry in Swaziland. For purposes of a clear discussion, and not because of any intention to divide or separate the Swazi working class in any way, except heuristically, we shall make a

distinction between those rural workers who are employed by capitalist farmers outside the sugar industry, producing cotton, tobacco, rice, etc., and those workers who are employed by multinational capital and by capitalist farmers in the production of timber, citrus, pineapples and especially sugar cane. This is simply to focus attention upon the specific circumstances especially of sugar workers who form the bulk of the rural proletariat and who are the main subjects of this study.

As a correlative argument, the workers in agro-industry tend to be more proletarianised than other rural workers i.e. they are more class conscious and have expressed their consciousness through various forms of resistance e.g. strikes, as will be shown in the body of this chapter. The specific character of workers in the agro-industry is directly related to the nature of the relationship which has developed between multinational capital and labour. To quote Mintz again '...the nature of productive relations is critical in determining the character of rural proletarians as a class; and the behaviour that accompanies their class position is in some measure informed by that position.'(5)

Over the last two decades, an interesting debate has been carried on between several social scientists on whether rural commodity producers in the Third World can be defined as proletarians. Beginning with a debate initiated by an Indian ~~woman~~ social scientist in 1969,(6) the discussion of how capitalism penetrates pre-capitalist social formations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and

the resulting processes of social differentiation, has become a serious issue in our understanding of class formations and class struggles in these areas. Taken up by Banaji,[7] Alavi,[8] McEachern[9] and Bernstein,[10] the debate became a means of moving away from the concept of underdevelopment as conceived of by Frank[11] and Kay,[12] for example, to a more serious analysis of the processes of commoditisation and proletarianisation of the labour of Third World producers.

Whilst this debate has clarified many of the issues relating to the incorporation of peasants as commodity producers into the international capitalist system, and the work of Henry Bernstein is the most advanced in terms of posing the issues correctly and most clearly, the question of whether migrant workers are proletarians or not remains unresolved. In the case of Swaziland, for example, labour migrates out of subsistence production and into capitalist enterprises within the country as well as to South Africa. The bulk of 'local' migrants are engaged in the production of sugar cane, timber and fruit, and most of these workers - both men and women - are 'seasonal' workers for multinational capital. Are they rural proletarians and when do they become such?

Work by Bernstein,[13] Cohen,[14] Goodman and Redclift[15] and other scholars has gone some way towards a clearer formulation of the concept of proletarianisation, and the recent collection of essays edited by Munslow and Finch[16] is a welcome addition to this important debate/discussion. Part of the reason why our

understanding of the concept of proletarianisation in Africa has remained unclear is the tradition of underdevelopment theory which has tended to underemphasise the fundamental relationship between capital and labour at the level of production. The concentration on exchange relations and the circulation of commodities,[17] resulted in less attention being given to the real relations of exploitation and class struggle which underlie the development of capitalism as a mode of production. It is due to the efforts of scholars like Cohen, Sandbrook,[18] Beckman [19] and Bernstein that a re-orientation of the analysis of African social formations is underway, and attention is now focusing on more important and essential relations involved in the processes of capitalist production.

While I agree with Cohen et al that; 'The essential issue is not whether there is a proletariat in the low-income countries, because where there is capitalism of any variety, there is some form of proletariat, but rather how contemporary classes have come into being in the complex setting of multiple ethnic and linguistic communities, and how workers in the Third World reveal their class position and class and political consciousness.'[19]

I believe that it is necessary for us to make a distinction between proletarianisation as a process of social transformation and class formation, and the particular character of a proletariat i.e. whether it is rural, migrant or industrial. It is the unintended conflation of these two issues which seems to lead to the comparisons which

imply that the European and North American workers are the 'proletariat proper'.[20] Even an excellent work like that recently published by Munslow and Finch[21] begins with a reference to the experience of the European proletariat. 'But the experience of replication of the kind of proletarianisation that occurred in Britain and the other advanced capitalist countries, with the creation of large-scale permanent proletariat, divorced from ownership of the means of production and thus totally dependent on the sale of its labour power for survival. This is the sense in which a proletariat is understood in this book. However, the process of proletarianisation, in the way it has occurred in the Third World, has not conformed either to the model of the advanced countries or to a new general pattern.'[22] (my emphasis)

This is a clear example of how the concept of proletarianisation and therefore the definition of a proletariat is tied to the European experience and to the tendency for European workers to be permanent - in terms of residence and length of contract. This definition not only detracts from the essential Marxist-Leninist definition of the proletariat,[23] but it also implies that all European workers are permanent workers. This of course is not the case, as evidenced by the large numbers of migrant workers within Europe and those who come into Western capitalist economies from the Third World[24]. The phenomenon of migration in Europe is as old as the capitalist system, and in the case of Britain, Irish workers are a good example of the use of cheap

migrant labour which was not permanent in the sense implied by Munslow and Finch.

In addition, the notion of total dispossession as being essential in the definition of a proletariat ignores the fact that the reproduction of the African working class is dependent solely upon wages earned, more so where settler colonialism was and still is dominant, as in the case of South Africa, because the settlers took most of the best land. The reproduction of the families of workers has increasingly been dependent upon the low wages of workers in employment, and when these workers are unemployed, their families starve.(25)

Therefore, I do not think that because African workers have a different experience of capitalism - for historical and socio-cultural reasons - that therefore they are not proletarians. The forms through which proletarianisation occurs are not the main determinants of whether a social class is proletarian or not. Rather, it is the specific and universal relationship which that class has with capital which defines it within a capitalist economy. And especially in the case of rural proletarians i.e. those workers involved in the production of agricultural commodities within the context of capitalist production for a wage - where the processes are varied and complex, the concept of proletarianisation involves pre-capitalist as well as capitalist relations of production. 'Clearly, however, the rise of generalised commodity production can be seen as an historical process on a continuum towards fully capitalist social relations. By extension, we will

find significant variation in historically determinant forms of simple commodity production and, consequently, in the degree and nature of their subsumption by capital. This presents major difficulties in characterising agrarian transition if we wish to decide the point at which conditions of capitalist production come into existence.'(26)

We shall not engagein the debate surrounding the integration of peasants as commodity producers for capital, because the focus of this study is the proletariat in the sugar industry. Nevertheless, the connections between the Swazi working class and the still large Swazi peasantry are very important and must not be understated. In spite of this important link, the position taken in this study is that while we recognise that many of the families of workers - both male and female - remain on Swazi Nation Land (SNL), and this has very important political, cultural and ideological implications which will be mentioned in the course of this chapter, nevertheless, a distinction will be made in terms of the process of proletarianisation between workers engaged in the production of surplus value and their families and peasant allies.(27)

Therefore, we begin from the premise that once a person enters into an unequal relationship with capital - i.e. as a worker - she or he begins a new process of economic, political, socio-cultural and ideological development, and can never be the same again. Visits to the rural areas, engaging in occasional subsistence production between jobs (waged work), the absence of employment and lack of money, do not invalidate that person's experience as a member of

the working class.

On this basis, we shall use the concept of proletarianisation to bring out this class experience and to show how, in spite of the complex nature of capitalist development in Swaziland and in the Third World generally, there is emerging a new and positive social class, whose roots are anchored in over a hundred years of commodity development and class struggle, and which is creating the basis for a new social order in Swazi society.(28)

We will show how a rural proletariat emerges in a sector of commodity agriculture which is controlled mainly by multinational capital. The proposition/argument is that in Swaziland there is a tendency for the process of proletarianisation to be more rapid within large-scale agribusiness concerns as compared to white settler agriculture. 'Besides linking agriculture to industry, agribusiness also means that agricultural production increasingly resembles industrial production, in the application of technology to control nature and increase productivity and in the use of wage labour...the spread of agribusiness to the Third World also entails a central role for the multinational corporations...(and)...the growing dominance of agribusiness typically means that vast numbers of small farmers are continually being deprived of their means of production. Many are pushed from the land into the ranks of wage labourers in a gradual process of proletarianisation. On the other end of the social scale, land, income, and resources are

increasingly concentrated in the hands of the largest and wealthiest agribusiness growers who come to dominate production.'(29)

A look at workers in the Timber and Fruit (pineapples and citrus) industries would have given a fuller picture of the proletariat in agro-industries, but due to constraints relating to the specificity of this chapter, we shall focus only upon sugar workers, who were the subjects of empirical research.

We shall discuss the establishment and development of the sugar industry in Swaziland within the context of the main production structure i.e. the plantation. In the second half of this chapter we will focus on the general characteristics of workers - male and female - in the industry and upon labour/capital relations. And finally, we will look at gender relations among the workers and the implications of these for working class solidarity and mobilisation. The forms of resistance and struggle will be discussed as part of the conclusion to this chapter.

The Sugar Industry in the Third World - General

The history of 'King Cane' across the Third World is one of slavery, repression, greed, barbarism and racism, and, it is one of the starkest examples of capitalism as an inhuman and destructive social system. Over the past four centuries, since large-scale cane sugar production was introduced in the mid-1550s in Brazil,(30) it spread to Peru(31) and across to Central and South America (Latin America) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,(32)

and into the Caribbean[33] and Cuba,[34] leaving a legacy of poverty and misery for the majority of people who have been drawn into its orbit either through slavery and other forms of coercion, or through necessity to sell their labour as 'free' workers for capital.

One phenomenon which stands out as one reads the history of cane sugar across Latin America and the Caribbean and into Africa this century, is the peculiar and rather uncanny relationship between this commodity and African labour. African people - women and men - were transported across the oceans to work as slaves specifically on the sugar plantations of America and the Caribbean. Although they worked in gold-panning, mining, and in the production of cocoa, cotton and tobacco, and as artisans and service workers - the bulk of African slaves were pushed into the sugar plantations. The history of African slavery and the rise of sugar as 'King' in the world commodity markets has been well recorded by historians and social scientists.[35]

In the early period of its development, the sugar industry[36] relied almost entirely upon Black slave labour. In Brazil, for example, 'The reliance on slave labour, predominantly African in origin, came about because of the absence in Brazil of large populations of Amerindians engaged in sedentary agriculture, and because of the inability of the European immigrants, whether by temperament or by choice, to satisfy the demand for agricultural labour.'[37] What Eisenberg fails to add to his explanation for the use of African slave labour is that racism underpinned the slave trade, and the fact that slavery was, at this stage

in the development of capitalism, the main source of primitive accumulation. Therefore, white immigrants were not about to do the back-breaking, dangerous and unrewarded work which was 'fit for slaves' in every sense of the word. In fact, the white immigrants, who were either slave owners or owners of property in land and other enterprises, fiercely resisted the abolition of slavery, and they passed various pieces of legislation to try and perpetuate slavery in other forms. For example, in 1885, the Brazilian plantation owners had the Sexagenarian Law passed, which basically said that all slaves over the age of sixty were free, but, that they were obliged to work for their former masters until they were sixty five years old.(38)

The combination of coercion, racism and exploitation has characterised the industry throughout its development. 'Slave labour was a central and dominating factor in the Brazilian economy for three and a half centuries',(39) and this applied everywhere where cane was 'king'. 'On the Peruvian coast, for instance, Africans were imported in large numbers to work in the grain-producing haciendas of the Lima area, the wine haciendas of the southern coast, and the large sugar haciendas scattered throughout the valleys of the centre and north.'(40)

Although the transition to 'free' labour occurred in the latter half of the last century - in response to the anti-slavery campaigns, but more importantly because capital required a 'free'(41) labour force in order to extract higher levels of surplus, the essential character

of capital/labour relations in the sugar industry throughout the imperialist dominated Third World is still very close to slavery. As Eisenberg explained '...the free labourer in the later nineteenth century enjoyed little material advantage over the slave. His (and her - P.M.) diet was virtually identical, his job tenure was less secure, and his rewards were paltry unless he had some particular skill...In the transition from slave to free labour, the sugar planters seem to have derived the greatest benefit, and the workers the least.'(42)

By the time sugar became an African commodity, outright slavery had been replaced by more covert forms of forced labour. Coercion provided the basis for a labour force which was nominally 'free' but which in reality was trapped in a relationship with capital very much akin to slavery. As will be shown in the case of the sugar industry in Swaziland, capital still uses the most backward and most extractive economic and political mechanisms to extract maximum surplus from a work force which is virtually enslaved. It is only in the post-WW II period in Africa that we see the movement of large-scale multinational capital into commodity agriculture, and with this the dramatic change in the structures of production. Agribusiness emerged as the new form of commodity agriculture, and this implied various economic and political changes at the level of production and at the level of the national economy.

The expansion of commodity agriculture in the Third World was a response to the urgent needs of the western

European countries for abundant raw materials to enable them to rebuild their war-torn economies. Economically, the second imperialist war provided the catalyst for the further refinement of the structures of capitalist exploitation especially in agriculture which had lagged behind during the first half of this century.

Therefore, it became necessary to restructure the agriculture sector, especially in Southern Africa, where settler colonialism was entrenched, and to bring it under the direct control offinance capital. The successful implementation of a neo-colonial system in most of the continent during the decade of the 1960s meant that the 'whip' was transferred into the hands of a generally collaborationist petty-bourgeoisie as far as the control and suppression of labour was concerned. The character of labour relations changed from one of forced labour - through taxation, repressive legislation and outright brutality as shown in Chapter 4 - to more subtle forms of coercion facilitated through various labour legislations passed by neo-colonial regimes which collaborated closely with multinational capital in the exploitation of Black labour.(43)

The Sugar Industry in Swaziland

In Swaziland, finance capital moved into three main areas of agriculture - sugar, timber and citrus fruit. The latter two industries had begun earlier, with timber going back as far as the early 1930s.(44) The first cane fields were planted in 1957 on the banks of the Usutu river (see map of Swaziland) by a company called Ubombo Ranches

Limited. One of the initial shareholders of this company was the notorious Allister Miller. The company had been formed in 1949 'with the object of ranching cattle for beef production and for the growing of crops under irrigation.'(45) Milling of the cane began in September, 1958, using a small mill purchased from Natal.(46) The initial area of caneland was 610 hectares, but after receiving a permit from the colonial government to manufacture up to 36,000 tons of sugar per annum, the company increased the land area under cane to 2,800 hectares by 1960. Using the infrastructure developed by the colonial government,(47) the company drew water from the Usutu river by means of a canal which provided an irrigation system for the production of the cane. All cane grown in Swaziland is under irrigation, and the expansion of the sugar industry has resulted in the diversion of the main rivers in the country to serve the interests of cane production.(48)

With the increase in the sugar quota, the production of rice, which had been one of the initial projects by the company, was abandoned in favour of cane. 'Former rice paddies were planted to cane and thus evolved a system, unique in the South African Sugar Industry, of cane being grown and irrigated as in the rice paddy layout.'(49) The company continued to expand operations as its quota was increased, and in 1962, a more modern sprinkler irrigation scheme was introduced, to cover 260 hectares of caneland. Between 1969/70 and 1976/77, Ubombo Ranches put up to 5,033 hectares of land under cane, and in 1977, the

company harvested 454,056 tons of cane, with a sucrose weight of 56,510 tonnes. By 1984, the company was milling 1,206,884 tons of cane, 45.5 per cent of which was produced on its own estate. The remaining 53.5 per cent was supplied by twenty seven outgrowers.(50) Lonhro Sugar Corporation Limited(51) holds controlling interests in Ubombo Ranches, and 'On 22nd July, 1975, His Majesty King Sobhuza II signed an Agreement with the Swaziland Sugar Milling Company Limited under which the Swazi Nation acquired 40 per cent of the share capital of Ubombo Ranches Limited...'(52) There is also some South African capital in this enterprise.(53)

The second sugar company - Mhlume (Swaziland) Sugar Company Limited, situated in the North-east of the country, also began planting cane in 1958, and went into continuous milling in 1960. The company was formed by Sir S.J. Hulett and Sons with the Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) as the other partner. 'The company was a subsidiary of Hulett's Sugar Corporation Limited until March, 1965, when Hulett's sold the major portion of its shareholding to the CDC; in April, 1966, the CDC bought out Hulett's remaining 10 per cent shareholding. In March, 1977, the Ngwenyama,(54) in trust for the Swazi nation, acquired 50 per cent of the company's issued share capital.'(55)

The CDC extended its operations into citrus, forestry, rice and cattle ranching, in addition to sugar cane. Through four main projects - namely the Swaziland Irrigation Scheme (SIS) formed in 1950; the Vuvulane Irrigation Farms (VIF) set up in 1962 mainly as an

outgrowers scheme; the Mananga Agricultural Management Centre (MAMC) established in 1973 to train middle-level managers for the sugar industry in Central and Southern Africa;[56] and their interests in forestry, the CDC has been able to entrench itself firmly within the Swazi economy as the largest and most powerful multinational, with very significant political and economic leverage. 'The CDC have more investments in Swaziland than anywhere else in the world on a per capita basis.'[57] By 1980, there were about 19,000 hectares of land under cane, all irrigated, and the CDC had control over much of this land.

The third sugar producer in Swaziland is a corporation made up of several multinational subsidiaries, managed by Tate and Lyle the big British multinational, which has a large share in the corporation. This is the Royal Swaziland Sugar Corporation - Simunye - incorporated in 1977 with an authorised share capital of 40.1 million Emalangeni,[58] and costing E120 million by 1980 when production began. 'The majority of the share capital (is being) subscribed by the Government of Swaziland and the Tibiyo Taka Ngwane, who (will) each contribute E13 million. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (E4 million), Tate and Lyle (E3.5 million), the German Development Bank - DEG (E2 million), Coca-Cola Corporation - USA (E1.7 million), Mitsui and Company Limited (E1.5 million), CDC (E1 million) and the International Finance Corporation, an affiliate of the World Bank (EO.4 million...The balance of the finance required, (E81 million) has been obtained by means of loans and export credit finance. The estimated cost of the

project is E121 million.'(59)

The initial area involved was about 9,000 hectares and the mill was expected to produce 120,000 tons at full capacity, by the end of 1983. The deal was that the Swazi government would not only raise a large part of the share capital, but it would also provide the land for the cane to be grown. Part of the land upon which the Simunye estates are located, was unallocated Swazi Nation Land, and another part, the Ngomane area, was occupied by about 550 families - approximately 5,000 persons - who were instructed to move from the area and threatened with forcible eviction and prosecution if they refused to obey the king's orders. In fact, the king, who has since died (1982) came out on the local television station to warn peasants that the state would send in bulldozers to demolish the homes of those peasants who were behaving like land owners and who were thus refusing to move. This was one of many examples of the collaboration between the neo-colonial state, the traditional monarchy and the companies, in expropriating and oppressing the Swazi people. Most of the able-bodied men and women from the area concerned now work on the cane fields which were once their gardens and fields, and the old and very young live in the slums on the edges of the sugar estate. The total land area occupied by the Simunye project is approximately 52,000 acres.

In addition, the Swaziland government agreed to a clause in the Simunye Sugar Project Agreement, drawn up by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) that it

would guarantee the level of working capital for the company. In this way the corporation is assured of operating at a minimal level even when the price of sugar falls, as has been happening since the early 1980s. Because of this clause, the Swaziland government has had to pay out instead of receiving revenues from the company. 'Due to the sharp fall in world sugar prices, the sugar levy dropped to E1.4 million from E4.0 million during the year 1981/82.[60]

While both Ubombo Ranches and Mhlume Sugar Company are served by several rivers which flow through the country (see map), in the case of Simunye, a huge dam had to be built - the Mjoli dam - off the Umbuluzi river and costing about E20 million.

All three of the mills utilise energy derived from the burning of bagasse to process the cane into raw sugar. A small percentage of the sugar produced at Ubombo Ranches - about 20 per cent - is refined for local consumption. The rest of the raw sugar is transported in bulk by rail to the port of Maputo in Mozambique, where it is exported to markets in Europe and North America. Until 1964, sugar sales were integrated into the South African sugar industry and marketed by agreement with the South African Sugar Association. The sugar and molasses were transported by road and rail to South African terminal points. When, in 1961 South Africa declared itself a republic, thereby making it 'an embarrassment' for British companies to continue selling through South Africa, the Swaziland Sugar Assocation was formed three

years later. The SSA controls all sales of sugar both locally and on the world market, and its members are the Swaziland Sugar Millers' Association and the Swaziland Cane Growers' Association. The Association's constitution 'is a schedule to and forms part of the Swaziland Sugar Industry Agreement promulgated in the Sugar Act of 1967,'(61) and as a matter of interest, Mr.G.M. Todd, the son of Mr Carl Todd, is not only a major sugar grower, but he sits on the boards of the SSA and the Swaziland Sugar Industry Quota Board. For example, in 1976/77 he was the president of the SSA. 'The Association co-ordinates sugar research through its extension committee and undertakes testing at mills under the supervision of its Cane Testing Services Technical Committee.'(62)

Therefore, in 1964, Swaziland was admitted into the Commonwealth Sugar Association, and granted an annual quota of 85,000 tonnes. When Britain joined the EEC in 1974, the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement came to an end, and on 28th February, 1975, Swaziland signed the Lome Convention. 'The provisions of the Convention entitle(d) Swaziland to supply about 120,000 tonnes of sugar per annum to the Community on preferential terms over an extended period.'(63) This means that approximately 180,000 tonnes of sugar, out of 300,000 tonnes produced annually by all three mills together, must be disposed of outside the guaranteeed EEC quota. Although the United States of America and Canada have been taking some of the excess sugar,(64) most of the remaining sugar is flogged on the open market at much lower prices.

Sugar has become and remains a major foreign exchange earner for Swaziland, bringing in over 50 per cent of national reserves mainly in the form of an export levy. 'The value of sugar and molasses exports in 1974 amounted to about E48 million or about 43 per cent of Swaziland's total exports for the year which are provisionally estimated at about E112 million.'(65) By 1978/79, the value of sugar and molasses had risen to E69.1 million and E1.1 million respectively.(66) With the establishment of Simunye in 1980, the importance of the industry in the economy and in the society has become disproportionate in relation to other sectors of commodity agriculture, manufacturing and mining. Most important is the significance of the sugar industry in terms of employment and the numbers of Swazi people directly and indirectly dependent upon such employment. In 1979/80, the industry employed 13,000 people - both women and men - and that number has increased over the last five years after the third mill started operations at Simunye in 1980/81.

As our data will show, the families of workers are heavily dependent upon their earnings in the industry, in spite of the residence of these families on SNL.

The dominance by sugar on the Swazi economy has had very serious economic and political consequences, and the multinational corporations involved in the production of this commodity wield significant power in the country.(67) We shall not go into the details of the relationship between multinational capital and the neo-colonial state, suffice to say that conditions of surplus accumulation

for capital have on the whole been very good in the Swazi economy, and multinational corporations have certainly not been loath to intervene directly in the decision-making processes of the state.(68) Although the interests of capital and the state do not always converge, especially on matters of taxation and sugar levies in the case of the sugar industry, and to a certain extent on the question of wage rates for semi-skilled and unskilled workers, there has been a general consensus between the two forces that co-operation is best for both their interests.(69)

Swaziland has a very conducive investment policy, and 'Unlike many other African nations, there are no foreign exchange problems. The repatriation of dividends and interest is freely permitted, subject to a withholding of tax of 15 per cent and a tax of 12.5 per cent respectively, and expatriate workers are allowed to remit up to one-third of their gross income.'(70) Besides these allowances, there are a host of investment incentives offered in a freely available 'guide for investors in Swaziland' pamphlet, ranging from training allowances and depreciation allowance on machinery, to special incentives for 'development', when certain industries are granted 'pioneer status' and thus qualify for additional income tax concessions.

For the Swazi people, the economic hegemony enjoyed by multinational capital, especially in agriculture, has resulted in the adoption by companies of very repressive and exploitative labour policies. Writing about conditions

of work at Ubombo Ranches in 1965, Halpern had this to say; 'This company is registered in Swaziland, but is controlled by British and South African directors. Its labour practices, and those of other sugar estates, have been modelled on those in the South African sugar industry, where conditions for workers are notoriously poor, but those in Swaziland did not even reach South African standards.'(71) Aided by the neo-colonial state since 1968, the sugar industry in Swaziland has made enormous profits on the one hand, while on the other, the conditions of work and general wage levels of the workers in the industry have continued to fall in relative terms.

Empirical Research and Data Collection

The empirical research on the sugar industry was undertaken between 1980-1982, using a structured questionnaire (open and closed questions). Although an initial pilot study was applied to all three companies, the final research was focused on 'agricultural' workers at the Ubombo Ranches Company in the South of Swaziland. We also undertook a three hour interview with two prominent male workers' leaders, who have to remain anonymous for reasons of political security. In 1983/84, a supplementary questionnaire was sent to the management of all three companies requesting essentially statistical information about their labour force. During the field-work, I interviewed the management and other concerned personnel at the three companies, and was able to get additional information on some of the issues not covered in the questionnaire. We also interviewed the Indunas and

Ndabazabantu whose functions and relations with the workers will be discussed later in this chapter.

Ubombo Ranches was chosen as the main research unit for several reasons. Not only is it the oldest sugar company in the country and one of the biggest, but it is the most 'typical' example of a sugar industry. Although the company grows only half of the cane required (in 1984/85 it produced 561,719 tonnes, about 46.5% of all cane crushed) and received the rest from 27 outgrowers, all cane is processed by the company mill. There is limited state involvement in the cultivation of the cane through Tibiyo Taka Ngwane, but the company is largely owned by the Multinational Corporation Lonhro, with equity participation by the Swazi State.

The industry dominates the Shiselweni district, is the biggest employer of labour, and all the main rivers have been diverted to service the sugar industry. A company town has developed around the industry, with shopping centre and a largely permanent population which is very dependent on the industry for its livelihood. In terms of labour supply, Ubombo Ranches is the most well placed of the sugar companies because Shiselweni district has tended to be a labour reserve area (see chapter 3).

More importantly, the workers at Ubombo Ranches are the most militant section of the Swazi working class, and they have a history of resistance and class consciousness which distinguishes them from other sections of the Swazi working class. During the research, we were able to interview two of the workers' leaders, who had

participated in the more recent strikes of 1979, and who gave us a marvellous insight into the character and consciousness of the workers at Ubombo Ranches. Although we looked for an articulate leadership at the other companies, the two leaders from Ubombo Ranches agreed with us that there were no clearly identifiable leaders in the rest of the industry. The reasons for this apparent discrepancy will be touched upon briefly in the last section of this chapter, although we acknowledge that there is an urgent need to make a more serious in-depth analysis of the character of working class consciousness in the industry and in the Swazi economy generally, and to consider the consequences of state and capital repression on the levels and forms of articulation of class consciousness among the Swazi workers.

In terms of the reliability of the data, the interviews conducted at Ubombo Ranches were most reflective of the situation in the industry generally, because they were done more carefully and more systematically, with the spontaneous yet politically informed co-operation of the workers. We found a rich history of awareness and political mobilisation at Ubombo Ranches, as will be shown in the section below on Resistance and Consciousness.

Finally, the data collected at Ubombo Ranches, together with the recorded interview with the two workers' leaders, give a fairly representative picture of the views and attitudes of workers in the industry. Although no sample can be totally representative and there were

differences for example in terms of labour catchment areas for the different companies, in addition to slight variations in company policy, there is generally a commonality among the employers on the one hand and the workers on the other. The employers organise within the Swaziland Sugar Association (SSA) and have adopted a common policy towards workers in all three companies in relation to labour issues; wages, housing, rations and political activity. They all use similar repressive structures and co-operate with the state through a common policy which marks a clear distinction between them and the workers.

Therefore, while certain differences of degree will be referred to in the discussion on the various issues affecting workers, on the whole the sample of workers interviewed at Ubombo Ranches Company will be treated as representative of the workers in the industry generally. We interviewed 276 men and 165 women agricultural workers, all of whom were randomly sampled within the nine company villages (see Appendix I). The questionnaire was essentially the same for both groups, except for those questions which referred specifically to women or to men.

Comments on primary data

When the empirical research was undertaken in 1981/82, my conception of the study was unclear and theoretically undeveloped. Consequently, most of the data collected was/is biographical and of limited use. The most important and most relevant data source is the recorded interviews with the workers' leaders at Ubombo

Ranches, who provided us with a wealth of information, especially relating to workers' attitudes, past and on-going struggles, state and company repression, etc. These interviews will serve as the main data source for the analysis of resistance and consciousness among sugar workers at Ubombo Ranches.

Structures of Production in the Swazi Sugar Industry

Unlike the earlier sugar producers of Central and South America, and the Caribbean, the sugar industry in Southern Africa was not characterised by outright slavery. The transition to 'free' labour occurred prior to the establishment of the industry in the region. As Walter Rodney explained in the case of Guyana, "Endemic slave revolts during the 1820s had taught the lesson that slavery as a form of control over labour was proving uneconomical and unstable. Nevertheless, slavery ended when it did in the West Indies mainly because of having exhausted itself politically and economically in terms of the system of international exchange."(72) The transition from slave labour within the hacienda to 'free' labour within the plantation system is brilliantly outlined in the case of Cuba by Manuel Moreno Fraginals.(73)

In the case of Southern Africa, the sugar industry began in Natal, South Africa, late last century, and by the mid-1950s the industry had been concentrated in the hands of a few large companies, amongst which was Huletts which played an important part in the initial development of the industry in Swaziland. "Sugar milling in Natal, however, developed without having to transform

its labour from slaves to rural proletarians. This advantage was enhanced by the relatively late entry of Natal into sugar production which permitted local millers to draw from the already considerable technological experience accumulated by millers elsewhere."(74) But, 'free' labour within the sugar industry remains enslaved through economic and social forms which are part of the new structures of production - i.e. the plantation, the settler estates and the outgrower schemes.

Across Southern Africa - in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mauritius, South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique,(75) the use of these structures in the industry is directly related to the availability of labour on the one hand, and the formulation of new mechanisms of labour control on the other. In terms of capital ownership, the industry is regionally dominated by multinational corporations like Tate and Lyle, CDC, Lonhro and Booker Agriculture International Limited, as well as by South African capital. For example, Lonhro is a major partner, with the state, in the sugar industry in Mauritius,(76) Malawi (77) and Swaziland.(78) It is the dominance of multinational capital in the production of sugar which has led to the transformation of the structures of production, whilst the reality of Southern Africa in terms of labour and land has had a major influence on the character of the industry in recent times.

The Plantation

The development of the plantation as an important structural feature of the sugar industry across the Third

World is intimately linked with the emergence of a 'free' rural proletariat, whose increasing dependence upon the industry for a livelihood marks the break between peasantisation [79] and proletarianisation. Central to the operations of the plantation as an efficient mechanism/structure of production is the control by multinational capital over land, labour, technology and production inputs. "Since the plantation is essentially a system for the production of maximum returns on invested capital, the use of land, labour and technology is continually re-evaluated to enable the system to produce more." [80]

In Swaziland, the plantation is the main structure within which sugar is produced. From its very inception, the industry has used the plantation because the conditions in Swaziland were most suitable to this form of production in terms of access to land and water, labour, technology and knowhow from South Africa, and the availability of production inputs like fertilizers, pesticides and seedlings, etc.

Sugar cane is also grown on white settler estates and by outgrowers who are essentially small kulak elements who lease land from the companies which own the mills. Mhlume Sugar Company leases land to outgrowers through the Vuvulane Irrigated Farms and Ubombo Ranches receives sugar cane from several outgrowers, among which is Tibiyo Taka Ngwane, as is indicated on the list attached at the end of this chapter.

We shall not be discussing the nature or character

of these two production structures (white settler estates and outgrower farms) due to time and space constraints. In addition, the focus of the study is on the operations of multinational capital and Ubombo Ranches has been selected as an 'ideal' case study. But reference will be made to conditions of work, etc., in the white estates and outgrower farms, especially those surrounding Ubombo Ranches.

Access to arable land and water for the irrigation of the crop were facilitated by the colonial state which actively encouraged the development of the crop. Referring to the possible uses of a hydro-electric project proposed in the eight year development plan for Swaziland; 1948-1956 - the report states that "A scheme such as that described above would yield a continuous steady flow of 2,000 cusecs or more at Sipofaneni. This water could be very economically diverted by canals onto the Lebombo Flats to irrigate some 200,000 acres of land. This land is, we understand, ideal for the growing of sugar." (81) Land became a commodity which is bought or acquired, used and discarded by the companies, and unlike the hacienda, land is not used by the plantation owners to bind labour. Instead, the commodisation of land is used to 'free' labour from subsistence production, and to make it available for wage labour on the plantation. "In occupying land that other people have used for subsistence purposes, it (the plantation - PM) usually undermines subsistence production, driving the indigenous population into wage labour on its newly won

lands as an immediate result." (82)

The expropriation of the best land in Swaziland during the early part of this century ensured the sugar industry of unlimited access to suitable land, and in the neo-colonial period, the Swazi state has provided the land required for the Third Sugar Mill at Simunye.

Crucial to the success of the plantation, as with any other capitalist enterprise, is the availability of labour. "The plantation operates on the assumption that labour is plentiful and cheap...It functions at an optimum where many labourers are competing for the same job, since such competition automatically lowers the price of labour." (83) In Swaziland, as with the rest of Southern Africa, the labour question has been the central issue throughout the development of capitalist production - whether in mining, industry or agriculture. The competition over cheap Black labour between the different sectors of the colonial economy and the South African mines in particular, made labour a 'scarce' commodity in a situation where capitalist production was labour intensive. As discussed in chapter 4, the richer South African economy was able to draw large numbers of workers as migrants from the 'supplier' states in the region, of which Swaziland was an important source, particularly in terms of the size of its population. (84)

Consequently, large numbers of Swazi workers were proletarianised outside the Swazi economy, and in the 1970s many of these workers became so-called unskilled

workers in the sugar industry. For example, out of 268 male workers interviewed at Ubombo Ranches Company, 121 (30.7%) had worked in the South African mines. The implications of this experience with mining capital will be discussed shortly in relation to the political consciousness of the workers in the sugar industry.

The competition over labour lasted only until the end of the second imperialist war, after which the economies of the region, and especially the South African economy, 'boomed' with huge inflows of finance capital. (85) Although there have been troughs in the availability of labour over the last two and a half decades, the sugar industry in Swaziland has enjoyed a large labour surplus, even employing large numbers of Mozambican workers - mainly as cane cutters - in the mid 1960s when Swazi labour preferred to work in South Africa where wages were slightly higher. (86)

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, the numbers of workers in the Swazi economy rose dramatically, especially in agriculture, as British and South African capital invested heavily in sugar, citrus, timber and other smaller agricultural enterprises (see Table 2). Between 1970-71 and 1979-80, sugar production rose from 161,223 tonnes to 240,695 tonnes, and presently with the production at Simunye mill taking the total yield up to 402,000 tonnes, Swaziland stands as one of Africa's largest cane producers. "The sugar industry is the single largest user of land in Swaziland, consumes more water than any other source, and is the largest single employer - it

Table 2

SWAZILAND - Selected Agricultural Commodity Exports

	Sugar (1000 MT)	Sawn Timber (1000 M3)	Citrus Fruit (1000 MT)	Rice (1000 MT)	Meat & Meat Products (MT)	Molasses (1000 MT)	Tobacco (MT)	Seed Cotton (1000 MT)	Cotton Lint (1000 MT)	Cotton Seed (1000 MT)
1968	135.6	-	29.8	5.8	4,443.6	45.7	75.3	4.6	1.0	1.5
1969	140.9	-	39.0	7.9	2,493.7	47.6	96.5	2.8	1.4	2.8
1970	157.8	61.7	45.4	7.3	2,483.3	39.3	138.9	3.6	0.9	1.8
1971	150.2	75.1	55.1	6.5	3,271.6	44.7	188.2	3.6	2.1	4.0
1972	172.2	73.9	53.5	5.3	3,388.5	49.1	144.6	3.8	3.1	5.8
1973	166.4	99.9	55.8	3.5	5,460.4	46.2	159.2	4.9	2.6	4.7
1974	183.9	100.2	45.8	3.1	3,130.8	55.2	252.9	3.8	0.9	1.9
1975	191.5	86.6	43.2	3.2	1,515.1	55.6	159.5	12.6	3.9	6.6
1976	197.9	89.7	49.5	3.1	3,718.2	69.1	194.6	6.2	2.1	3.7
1977	202.8	88.7	48.0	2.9	2,977.9	62.7	170.9	5.5	3.2	5.6
1978	216.8	58.5	47.1	0.3	3,894.0	63.0	-	7.3	5.2	9.3
1979	223.6	112.9	42.5	-	-	67.4	-	3.9	4.2	7.6

Source: Central Statistical Office, Mbabne, March 24, 1980.

was estimated that 60,000 people were wholly or partly dependent on sugar for a living in 1979."(87) Althouth the numbers of workers employed by the industry have dropped in relative terms over the last ten years (see Table 3) the industry remains a very important employer in the economy.

This surplus of readily available and cheap mainly unskilled labour in the economy can be explained by several factors. First of all, the 'boom' in the South African economy in the 1960s and early 70s led to certain fundamental changes in the structure and operations of that economy.(88) More importantly for our purposes, there was a dramatic change in the recruitment policies of the South African mining companies. Until the 1960s the foreign migrant component of the labour force in the South African mines was predominant, but from the 60s, the companies turned 'inward', and taking advantage of the bantustan policies of the regime, they began to recruit more Black South African workers, thereby replacing large numbers of workers from the neighbouring states. This change is clearly reflected in the rapid decline of migrants from Swaziland to South Africa during the 1970s, as shown in Table 4. By 1981, the numbers were down to 11,048 although they were expected to rise as a reflection of South Africa's 'favourable' attitude towards Swaziland.(89)

Secondly, the sugar industry in particular has enjoyed abundant labour supply in recent years due to the escalating crisis in South Africa and the serious economic

Table 3

Workers in the Sugar Industry 1977-1983 (Ubombo Ranches, Simunye and Mblume)

Year	Ubombo Ranches	Simunye	Mhlume	Total
1977	2,920		1,594	4,114
1978	2,593		1,408	4,001
1979	2,143		1,365	3,508
1980	1,783	1,840	1,253	4,876
1981	2,130	2,719	1,252	6,101
1982	1,828	2,929	1,079	5,835
1983	1,528	2,959	1,037	5,524

Source: Sugar Industry, 1984.

Table 4

People Recruited from Swaziland for Mines in South Africa 1969-1979

Period	Gold Mines	Platinum Mines	Coal Mines	Number Total
1969	7941	n/a	326	8267
1970	8820	215	291	9326
1971	6474	180	312	6966
1972	6463	438	314	7215
1973	7079	780	231	8090
1974	8207	1143	224	9574
1975	16272	475	257	17004
1976	18652	1640	451	20743
1977	13615	1302	574	15491
1978	11387	1561	1336	14284
1979	10880	697	874	12451
Quarter 1	3057	110	338	3505
Quarter 2	2111	227	105	2443
Quarter 3	2258	65	121	2444
Quarter 4	3454	295	310	4059

Source: Mine Labour Organisation.

and military problems faced by Mozambique. Large numbers of Mozambicans have fled across the border into Swaziland and they are exploited by the industry as the cheapest form of labour. As happened during the colonial period when Mozambican workers fled from forced labour (see chapter 4), once again Mozambicans are being subjected to extreme forms of exploitation due to the unfortunate circumstances in their country. Because the sugar industry in Swaziland has remained largely labour intensive, in terms of field activities, the Mozambican refugees who are mainly unskilled former peasants and children, are not only a source of the cheapest labour, but they will also be used to undermine the wage levels and general conditions of life and work of the Swazi workers. Because most Mozambican workers in the industry, especially in the case of Mhlume which is closest to Mozambique, will be 'illegal' immigrants, they are not only employed on a casual/daily basis,but they do not even receive the minimum wage.

Although this phenomena was not evident during the period of my research into the industry in Swaziland, newspaper reports on the large numbers of Mozambican refugees in the eastern part of the country confirm the argument just presented. The use of 'illegal' migrant labour in the sugar industry is not peculiar to Swaziland. It is a general characteristic of capitalist agriculture in the region, where migration has regulated and structured the flow and mobility of labour. Under such conditions, capitalist agriculture has made

extensive use of 'illegal' labour.(90)

Therefore, as the national reservoir of cheap labour has increased within the Swazi economy, so also the competition for jobs among workers, especially among unskilled workers, has increased. The sugar industry, like other sectors of the economy, took advantage of this surplus by instituting labour policies which pay scant regard to workers' rights. We will discuss these policies below. Suffice to say that while on the one hand the national reservoir of labour has increased, with women becoming a larger component of the labour force at both the national level and within the sugar industry (see Tables 5 and 6), so the price of labour has fallen together with wages to even lower levels in real terms in relation to the retail price index and standard of living in the country.(91)

The increasing reserve of labour also reflects the growing problem of unemployment in the country, especially in the 1980s, among unskilled and semi-skilled workers. "There are two aspects of such unemployment: structural and cyclical. Even before the current recession assumed its present proportions in Swaziland, it was estimated by Barclays Bank of Swaziland that almost 5,000 additional school leavers were annually entering the ranks of the unemployed - i.e. 5,000 more job seekers than jobs available. With the onset of the full force of the recession, this structural unemployment is being compounded by lay-offs in virtually all sectors."(92) By January, 1986, total formal sector employment had

Table 5

Workers in Ubombo Ranches – Gender Differentiation

Year	Female	Male	Total
1977	803	2,113	2,920
1978	532	2,061	2,593
1979	661	1,482	2,143
1980	796	987	1,783
1981	951	1,179	2,130
1982	829	999	1,828
1983	934	594	1,528

Source: Ubombo Ranches Sugar Company, 1984.

Table 6

General Levels of Employment

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
TOTAL	42,426	47,051	53,856	57,032	62,061	64,405	66,215	66,225	71,256	73,767
MALES	35,068	35,953	42,609	44,769	48,746	50,011	47,559	47,266	54,017	56,767
FEMALES	7,358	11,698	11,247	12,263	13,585	14,394	18,656	17,572	17,239	17,000

Source: Labour Department Annual Report, Central Statistical Office, Swaziland Government, Mbabane, 1980

fallen to 75,133, from a high of 79,739 in 1981.(93)

In terms of technology, the relationship between the production process and the introduction of new technology seems to have been determined mainly by two factors; the shortage of male labour on the one hand and the availability of women and children's labour on the other, and, by the more general development of sugar technology internationally. It is important to note that this is only in relation to the use of field technology i.e. in the cultivation and harvesting of the cane. The processing and refinement of the cane entails a different labour process which is not our immediate concern.

Therefore, it is interesting to note that in all three companies, the change to mechanised harvesting of cane seems to have been motivated by a shortage of male labour on the one hand, which coincided with the development of new harvesting technology, and the increased use of women and children's labour on the other. This trend seems to be directly related to the steady decline in the price of sugar over the last 10-12 years (see Appendix II). The picture which emerges therefore is one where capital has used partial mechanisation of harvesting to counteract the shortage of male labour at a particular point in time (from about 1978/79) and yet has employed more women and children as cheap and very low paid labour in the process of cane cultivation.

Over the last ten to twelve years, both Ubombo Ranches and Mhlume Sugar Companies mechanised up to 50% of their cane harvesting. This was due to "shortage of men willing to cut and stack cane" and "to speed up production".[94] If we look specifically at Ubombo Ranches, this trend becomes even clearer. Between 1979/80 and 1983, the numbers of male workers employed by the company declined from 2,061 to 594. While in the same period, the numbers of women rose from 661 to 934. The increase in the size of the female work force does not reflect the extensive use of child labour which is prevalent in all the companies, but particularly at Ubombo Ranches.

During the research period, we found that virtually all the cane-cutters had 6-7 young male children, between the ages of 9 and 13, who were 'employed' by each cutter as "apprentices".[95] The children work mainly during the peak harvesting period, picking and stacking the cane. This of course enables the cutters to work faster and speed up the rate of cane processing which is very dependent upon the flow of the raw cane from the fields. In our interviews with two of the workers' leaders at Ubombo Ranches, we were told that child labour had become essential to the processing of the cane, because it was inexpensive and increased the flow of cane to the mill. The company denied any knowledge of the existence of the children, although the workers told us that in 1981 there were at least 300 children in the fields at Ubombo Ranches. One of the workers said "There isn't anywhere where sugar

is grown where they don't use children. All these plantations are full of this disease."(96)

The children are 'employed' by the cutters who pay them a paltry sum at the end of the month. Because they are not legally recognised by the company, the children are supposedly fed by the cutters who 'employ' them, they sleep in the same rooms with the cutters, and are totally dependent upon the individual cutters. According to the workers, when the Company reluctantly discouraged the use of child 'apprentices' in response to criticism by the Swazi government (specifically the Deputy Prime Minister) of the practice, this resulted in a serious cane shortage at the mill and the practice was resumed the following season, with a small concession - that the company would increase the rations of each cutter to cater for the food needs of the children.

Most of the children are Mozambican refugees whose parents are illegally in Swaziland, and therefore, like their parents, the children are subjected to extreme forms of exploitation by the company, through the cutters.

In response to the question "Should children be employed in the industry?", we received a disturbing number of affirmative answers (see Table 7). This response seemed to be indicative mainly of the difficult economic situation most workers' families face, not only in terms of reproducing themselves, but also in relation to the education of their children.

For example, all workers thought that children should go to school, but not all workers sent their children to

Table 7

Attitudes of Workers at Ubombo Ranches Towards Employment of Children in the Industry

Should children be employed?

Yes - Women	97	Men (148)	No - Women	57	Men	91
To help parents	31	69	Lives ruined/not paid	12		30
To support themselves	52	56	Should be at home to plough, herd cattle	23		23
To learn to work	5	12	Should go to school	5		5
To keep out of trouble	9	11	Too young	17		33
Total	97	148		57		91

Source: Questionnaire, 1980/81.

school. Among the 116 women interviewed, 85 said their children attended school, and 31 women answered in the negative. Of the 140 men who answered this question, 94 answered in the affirmative and 46 said their children did not attend school. The main reason for non-attendance in both cases was shortage of money to pay school fees. In relation to the use of Mozambican refugee children, the fact that these children were non-Swazi and illegally in the country, combined with the complicity of the company and the extra money cutters were making by using the children, made the practice acceptable to many workers.

Therefore, it is quite clear that the use of technology in the fields is directly related to profit maximisation and has a definite gender bias in terms of the use of women and children's labour. Changes in the harvesting of cane and the introduction of mechanical harvesters in the final analysis do not disturb the balance in the organic composition of capital - but rather serve to stabilise it, especially in terms of world market prices and in preserving the so-called 'traditional' division of tasks in the cane fields.(97)

<u>Division of labour in the fields - differentiation on the basis of work and gender</u>

In our research and discussions with workers in the sugar industry, we focused on so-called agricultural workers. The division between workers who are engaged in the field and those involved in the processing of cane into sugar, that is industrial workers, has several

implications for both workers and capital.[98] This distinction has characterised the industry since its inception and has become more entrenched as processing technology has developed more rapidly than 'field' technology.[99]

At a general level, the distinction made between agricultural and industrial workers has meant that capital has divided the workers into two separate sections within the same industry. While in the case of most agriculatural products the cultivation of the commodity is a separate process from its manufacture and may involve several classes, for example peasant producers who sell to comprador elements or 'middle-men' (sic) who then sell the commodity to capitalists involved in the processing or manufacture of the final product, in the case of sugar, often the cultivation and processing occurs within the same economic unit. Therefore, there are definite reasons why capital creates a structural division between workers in the field and workers at the mill, and these reasons will be discussed more fully below in relation to the mechanisms of surplus extraction and worker control.

While it is structurally correct therefore to describe workers involved in the cultivation of cane as agricultural workers, and those who process the cane as industrial workers we will be using this distinction only because it is convenient in differentiating one section of workers from the other in terms of the focus of our research. The concentration on agricultural workers is not an acceptance of the division of the working class in the

industry, but rather a means of controlling the size and scope of the analysis in relation to the objectives of the study. Throughout the study we have concentrated upon agriculture as a process of cultivation rather than on the further process of manufacture and/or refinement. But Agribusiness encompasses the total process of production.[100] Therefore, in the discussion of forms of resistance and consciousness, we shall look at both agricultural and industrial workers in relation to capital.

General Characteristics of Agricultural Workers

At a very general biographical level, the agricultural workers were divided into women and men; married or unmarried; permanent or casual; with or without education (Table 8).

In terms of the distribution of jobs (Table 9) most of the women were weeders which is one of the lowest paying, yet most drugerous and exhausting jobs in the field, while the men were cane cutters as well as several other jobs connected with irrigation etc. At Mhlume Sugar Company and at Sinunye as well, women were employed mainly as weeders and irrigators, and in the former they made up 30.2% of the field work-force in 1980/81. At Ubombo Ranches women also did the first burning of the cane and what were described as "routine cane growing operations".

Together, both tables (8 and 9) reflect very clearly many of the structural and gender inequalities within the industry and in the society generally.[101] Although

Table 8

General Characteristics of Agricultural Workers at Ubombo Ranches

Characteristics	Women	%	Men	%
Married	57	34.5	152	55.3
Single/unmarried	108	65.5	123	44.7
Permanent	56	33.9	222	80.7
Casual	109	66.1	53	19.3
Education	68	41.2	106	38.5
No education	97	58.8	169	61.5
	165	100	275	100

Source: Questionnaire, 190/81.

Table 9
Distribution of Tasks among Agricultural Workers in the Sugar Industry

Job Description	Women (182)	Men (269)
Cane cutting	-	64
Weeding	159	6
Loading cane	2	3
Planting	1	2
Other (includes clerk, kitchen worker, watering attendant, Induna, cleaner, pump attendant, company police.	Engine attendant, tractor driver, general.	

Source: Questionnaire, 1980/81.

most agricultural workers are employed as unskilled or semi-skilled and are paid very low rates on a daily basis, for example the average daily wage in 1984 was E3.00,[102] throughout the industry women tend to be unmarried or single; casual, low education or none at all and by implication, they are the lowest paid. Consequently, although the wage structure appears to be unbiased in gender terms, when we look more closely at the distribution of jobs and the grading of jobs, we realise that women workers in the field are engaged in the lowest paying jobs (Table 10). The division of labour in the fields reflects not only the character of capitalist production relations in terms of their backwardness and repressiveness, but also the gender divisions which permeate the whole industry and reinforce the structures of surplus extraction.

While on the one hand women are not allowed to work as cane-cutters - not because they are physically unable to do so as the history of cane has proved when there is a shortage of male labour, women do cut cane very efficiently. Instead it is because cane-cutting has become a 'traditional' male job. This 'tradition' reflects a division of labour in the cultivation of cane which has been taken for granted as 'natural' within the industry. In fact, this division of labour has enabled male workers to retain an economic 'advantage' over women workers in the field, in addition to excluding women from learning the skill of cane-cutting, thereby perpetuating an element of inequality among the workers

Table 10
Ubombo Ranches Company Basic Wage Rates 1980/81 (daily paid)

Grade	Rate (Emalangeni)	Job description
1	2.20 - 2.40	Women and men weeders
2	2.35 - 2.55	Sprinklers, irrigation
3	2.65 - 2.97	Engines and pumps
4	3.05 - 3.37	Cane cutters
5	3.55 - 3.95	Indunas
6	4.20 - 4.68	Black section Managers(1)

(1) Black section managers are paid on a daily basis while white counterparts are paid salaries.

(2) There is no increment after 4 years of employment in the company.

Source: Ubombo Ranches Company 1980/81.

in economic and gender terms.

The companies maintain this division of labour because it has served their interests. Therefore, when male workers are unavailable to cut the cane, the companies resort to mechanised harvesting rather than disturb the 'traditional' division of labour, while they extract the value which the machines cannot produce from women and children's labour.

Women as seasonal/casual labour

The availability and use of women's labour as cheap seasonal labour in the cultivation of cane is a reflection of processes both within the subsistence sector and in the sugar industry as a whole in Swaziland.(103) Three broad categories of women enter the sugar industry as seasonal/casual labour or as permanent workers. Being seasonal/casual or permanent has very important implications for the women (and men) in terms of wages, medical benefits and maternity rights, housing and job security.

The first and largest group of women seeking employment in the industry are mainly single women, with or without children, who lived in the peri-urban areas surrounding the estates or plantations and for whom seasonal work is the only or main source of reproduction. At Ubombo Ranches they made up 65.5% of the total number of women interviewed and at Mhlume Sugar Company, out of 198 women employed in agriculture, 195 were single. During the off-peak season, these women survive either through beer brewing and prostitution, or they migrate to other

seasonal work for example picking citrus in the vicinity of the sugar plantations or to the pineapple growing areas of Malkems. Most tend to live around the plantation, waiting for the next season. Some go to the subsistence sector to assist in harvesting etc., but very few of these women retained strong links with the rural subsistence sector.

The second category is made up of unmarried women who work in the industry seasonally, but who return to the subsistence sector to participate in subsistence production during the planting or harvesting season. These women tend to work as seasonal workers even after marriage.

The third and smallest group are the married women who are residentially located in the subsistence sector, might come to the industry with their husbands or on their own, and return periodically to the rural area to engage in subsistence production.

Married and unmarried women who were permanent workers constitute a small percentage of the female work force, although as the numbers of male workers have decreased over the last ten years, the numbers of permanent women workers have increased slightly. For example, although Mhlume Sugar Company was unable to provide the gender specification for the labour force between 1973-1983, they confirmed an increase in the numbers of women employed over the last decade because they said there were less men on the labour market.(104) (See also Table 11.)

Table 11

Labour Force at Mhlume Sugar Company 1973-1983

Year	Casual	Permanent	Total
1973	1019	1096	2115
1974	774	1083	1857
1975	673	1147	1820
1976	501	1273	1774
1977	350	1244	1594
1978	236	1172	1408
1979	291	1074	1365
1980	277	976	1253
1981	292	960	1252
1982	25	1054	1079
1983	95	942	1037

Source: Mhlume Sugar Company, 1984.

This is the character of female proletarianisation in the industry, and seen within the wider context of class formation in the society, women have come to occupy an important position within the Swazi working class over the last decade.(105)

The movement of women into the sugar industry is underpinned by a process of continuing decline in the viability of subsistence production as a source of reproduction, and the process of proletarianisation is linked into the decline on the one hand of subsistence resources, and on the other into the increasing dominance of agriculture and the Swazi economy generally by finance capital.(106) Most workers interviewed at Ubombo Ranches answered that they had come to work in the industry because they needed money (Table 12). The most badly affected area in the country seems to be the Shiselweni district, which as mentioned earlier, has historically served as a reserve of cheap labour for the South African mines and white farms, and which seems to be a major supplier of cheap labour to the Ubombo Ranches Company. The second largest supplier was Lubombo district, with the other two districts providing negligible numbers of workers, both male and female (Table 13).

This trend is confirmed by the answer given by all three sugar companies that they had not experienced a labour shortage for most of this decade, and in fact, Simunye which had initially mechanised harvesting up to 50%, planned to decrease this to as low as 10% by 1984 due to greater availability of cane cutters.(107)

Table 12
Reasons for Seeking Work at Ubombo Ranches

Reasons	Women	Men
1. No option/needed money	109	203
2. Nearer home	7	48
3. Hardship	43	2
Total	159	253
If given option		
1. Would leave	153	247
2. Would stay	12	10
	165	257

Source: Questionnaire, 1980/81.

Table 13

Distribution of Workers According to Districts (1981/82)

	Women female	%	Men Male	%
Hhohho	3	1.9	8	3.0
Lubombo	73	45	92	35.4
Manzini	2	1.2	16	6.2
Shrielivem	84	51.9	144	55.4
Total	162	100	260	100

Source: Questionnaire, 1980/81.

Therefore, the general economic crisis affecting the international capitalist system and which has had a serious impact on the Swazi economy,[108] has manifested itself in rising unemployment and a swelling of the reserve of cheap labour - both male and female. This situation has been aggravated by declining commodity prices, especially of agricultural products, unsuccessful development projects and in particular the failure of the Rural Development Project (RDA)[109] over the last thirty years to stimulate 'development' in the sense of increased commodity production within the peasant subsistence sector. The response of the Swazi peasantry has been one of steady migration out of the rural areas and into the towns and agri-business concerns. Several studies have been made on this phenomenon and need not be repeated here. Suffice to say that the sugar industry has benefited very extensively from the peasant reproduction crisis, and has consequently been able to maintain productivity at a profitable level in spite of the rock bottom prices of sugar over the last decade.

Conditions of life and work

The conditions of life and work for unskilled and semi-skilled workers are notoriously poor, and are a good reflection of the backward forms of surplus extraction and racism which characterise the industry generally in the Third World.[110] In the case of Swaziland, housing is divided on the basis of class, and all the unskilled and semi-skilled workers are Swazi. All three companies had very poor housing facilities for these workers, and all

the companies used the single sex 'barracks' type of structure to house large numbers of seasonal/casual workers together. The facilities are poor and clearly inadequate, and the workers complained bitterly about the lack of space and lack of privacy, and described the attitude of the companies as insulting and racist. White employers and salaried Swazi personnel live in well built, spacious, comfortable houses on the other side of the plantation. In between the compounds where the workers live and the comfortable suburban mainly white residences, stands the mill. When the wind blows, it carries with it the smell of chemicals and molasses in the direction of the workers' compounds.

The buildings housing the workers - both agricultural and industrial - house up to 40 workers in a room, all sleeping on the bare floor on straw mats or on thin sponge mattresses, with barely any room to move about. The concrete floor is cold and unhealthy and the over-crowded conditions give rise to all kinds of social and health problems. All the buildings have metal-sheeting roofs without ceilings, and during the summer it is hot and uncomfortable and during the winter the rooms are cold. What was meant to be ventilation by leaving a space between the walls and the roof has become a source of ill-health and irritation to the workers, especially during the cane burning season when the air is thick with little slivers of cane soot which enter the buildings and settle everywhere. The sanitation is generally poor, with too many workers having to share limited ablutions

and cooking facilities. Overcrowding, poor diet, long hours in the fields without food - workers begin the day at around 4 a.m. "or when it gets light" until about 3 p.m. in the afternoon - and they do not even have basic toilet facilities in the fields.[111] These are the conditions of life and work for Black agricultural workers in the Swazi sugar industry.

Health and Safety

In terms of health and safety in the work place, conditions are just as bad. All workers are theoretically eligible for medical care, but most workers complained that the health facilities were too minimal and inadequate. The clinic at Ubombo Ranches catered only for bruises and slight injuries, and medication was available only for occupational diseases but did not extend to other diseases e.g. venereal diseases and major illnesses not directly related to the job. Workers have to pay for tooth extraction for example, which can cost up to E3.00. Only children who are registered at the Labour Controller's Office in the company are eligible for medical care, up to the age of 16, after which they are considered adults. These are presumably the children of permanent workers since seasonal/casual workers are not provided with family housing, are mainly unmarried mothers whose children are not eligible for health care in the company. The children 'employed' by the cane cutters are also not eligible for medical care because, as explained earlier in this chapter, they are not formally recognised by the company. These children, like all other children who do

not have access to medical facilities, suffer very much from this unfair and cruel policy.

The unskilled and semi-skilled agricultural and industrial workers have to use a different entrance to the clinic from the salaried staff who are predominantly white. Because institutionalised racism is forbidden by law in Swaziland, racist practices are maintained through class privileges. In this case, the small number of salaried Swazi indirectly collaborate with the white management in excluding the majority of company employees from the better health facilities in the clinic. This practice applies to entertainment facilities, certain sports facilities, for example the tennis court is open only to members, and the membership fees are very high, deliberately to exclude the majority of workers, for elitist and racist reasons.

In the fields (and in the mill) the accident rate tends to be very high. Workers are injured by faulty machinery, vehicle (tractors) accidents in the fields and during the transportation of cane to the mill, and other occupational accidents (Table 14). Many workers have been injured and or killed by electrically related accidents. For example, a worker might unknowingly lift a rod in the field and hit an overhead electrical wire and is electrocuted. "Some employers in agricultural establishments employ permanent tractor conductors, who are required to travel on tractors designed to carry only one person - the driver. These conductors are either required to sit on the mudguards or on the drawbars

Table 14

Accidents in Wage Employment from 1973-1981

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Total Reported	1208	1059	1209	1396	1316	1327	1629	1370	1375
Fatal Cases	23	21	26	18	23	33	38	20	37

NB Total active working population in 1980 = 82,000.

NB 1981 - Sugar industry had 28% of accidents (378 accidents - 28%; 4 fatalities - 10%).
Agriculture had 68 accidents, 3 fatalities.
Government had the highest fatal rate 46% (33 accidents; 17 fatalities).

Source: Annual Report, Labour Department, 1979, p. 40.

between the tractor and the trailer. The most common accident is caused by the wheel catching clothing or pulling the worker around the wheel. The results are frequently fatal."(112) Often employers are completely against the idea of involving workers in safety and health matters saying that by so doing, they would be involving the workers in company policy making and decision making.(113)

Because so many workers have very little or no education, they are unable to read instructions or heed danger signs, and many lose limbs and life because they cannot read the warning instructions. This hazardous situation is aggravated by the importation of second-hand machinery, especially boilers and pressure vessels, from South Africa. These cause extensive damange and many fatalities when they explode. Although there has been some effort on the part of the companies to improve conditions of work in recent years, in response to the latest Industrial Relations legislation and workers' pressure for better working conditions, profit still dictates the extent of work safety for workers in the industry.(114)

In the field, the most serious hazard workers face is chemical poisoning. Workers, mainly men, are exposed to large quantities of organophosphates including parathion and malathion, etc., which are used extensively in the citrus and sugar industry. "There is no law in Swaziland controlling the importation, distribution, sale and use of hazardous chemicals",(115) which are banned in

most of the exporting countries. The Annual Labour Report of 1976 stated that "Over 100 cases each year including at least two fatal cases were reported... following parathion poisoning during insecticide spraying."[116] There was and still is no obligation on the part of the employers to provide protective clothing to the workers.

Without proper protective clothing, workers are vulnerable to serious contamination which frequently leads to death after drawn out illness, and yet such contamination is still not regarded as a basis for compensation. If workers decided to claim compensation for contamination related illnesses, they would have to prove the connection between the two. This requires expensive medical tests and reports which workers cannot afford. Therefore, without Trade Union representation, affected workers often just have to accept what the company gives them and then go back to the subsistence sector to die.

For the cane cutters and those women workers who do the first burning of the cane, their work presents another set of dangers. Although the pre-harvest fires were initially introduced to facilitate the use of mechanical harvesters, they have now assumed a different purpose. "The consequences of this practice for the manual cutter are very serious indeed. He is forced into a faster and more intense pace of work. Whereas traditionally the cutters worked at a pace set for themselves, they are now under pressure to speed up harvesting the burned fields to avoid

sugar loss; the danger of rain destroying the entire crop is ever present in the tropics, even in time of drought. Workers enter the fields even before the fires have completely died out. In addition to the tropical heat and sun, they must now work over smouldering straw, surrounded by smoke, in temperatures 20-30% higher than before. The smoke-filled air results in a growing incidence of lung disease and infection."(117)

Since they have to buy their own overalls and boots which they often cannot afford, workers frequently suffer very bad burns during the harvesting season. The work is hard and hot, and the fire hazard is aggravated by the cheap nylon/acrylic shirts which the cane cutters wear, which are so easily set alight by a small spark from the smouldering cane. The alternative is to be shirtless and suffer the itch which is caused by the fine down on the cane leaves. "Additionally, the workers are exposed to insects, cactus-like spines, and pests, including the rats which proliferate in tropical cane fields."(118) Poisonous snakes also present an added danger to the lives of field workers.

The work is hard and very demanding, most field workers put in an average of 9 hours a day, often without any rest or food. "A number of psychological studies of the exertion of the cane cutter have shown that the energy expenditure represents the highest value that can be sustained by able bodied men during an 8 hour working day."(119) The conditions of work are primitive while the general health of the workers is poor and the wages are

abysmally low. But the workers stay on and compete with each other for the jobs because they have no choice. They need the money to supplement the subsistence sector where most of their families live, to pay school fees for the children, to pay taxes, buy agricultural inputs or hire a tractor to plough a few acres in a few hours.

Compensation for injury is paid only to those workers who have completed the six months probation period. This means that only permanent workers are eligible for compensation, and even in their case, it is calculated as payment for the days the worker did not work. This is contrary to the provisions of the Employment Act 1980 but without Trade Union representation and a state which cares little about the rights and welfare of its people, the workers are unable to contest this practice.

Women workers are the most disadvantaged in terms of health and welfare benefits. In the industry generally, women are penalised for their nurturing role, for being women. All women workers who become pregnant are either given three months unpaid maternal leave, or more often told to leave. In the case of Ubombo Ranches, many of the seasonal women workers complained bitterly that they were not receiving even the unpaid leave, but were instead fired as soon as they became visibly pregnant. When they return to the company after delivery, they were re-hired, if they were lucky, as first time employees. This means that they cannot have any of the rights accruing to permanent workers, and even if they do not become pregnant, at the end of each season they are jobless

and must wait for the next season to secure employment.

All the women hated being seasonal workers. They hated the jobs they had to do in the industry. Due to the existing division of labour in the fields, and because they are excluded from the processing of the cane,[120] their jobs are back-breaking, intensive, low-paying work like weeding and irrigating. In addition, the women in the fields are restricted to those jobs which last the shortest time in terms of the agricultural work cycle. Therefore, they are the most vulnerable of all the workers in the industry in every way.

During the off-season, these women are faced with serious problems of homelessness, hunger and destitution. Often they are single parent mothers who are without any other source of livelihood. Their destitution makes them a readily available source of the cheapest labour for the industry.

In conclusion we can say that the general conditions of work and life for unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the sugar industry in Swaziland, and at Ubombo Ranches in particular, are very bad. Wages are extremely low, and although the company reluctantly admitted that the wages were inadequate,[121] they have not increased the wages in real terms because that would affect company profits. Living conditions are poor and inadequate, and the very fact that the companies build the type of housing which totally disregards the personal and social needs of workers, is a clear indication of the racist and repressive ideology which informs their attitude and

policies towards Swazi workers.[122] There can be no denying the political and ideological influences which the South African apartheid system has on multinational corporations in the region, coupled with the fact that poor housing is part of the cheapness of African labour generally on the continent, and especially in the sugar industry. The terrible conditions of work and living at Ubombo Ranches are not therefore peculiar to Swaziland. They reflect the general logic of capital in commodity agriculture and more specifically in the cultivation of sugar cane as an agricultural commodity.

The same logic underlies the provision of a nutritionally inadequate diet to the workers, inadequate medical facilities in an industry with so many occupational hazards, absence/denial of maternity benefits and abuse of women's nurturing abilities to make them an even cheaper source of surplus value.

Most workers said that given a choice, they would leave the industry immediately. But they have no choice in the present circumstances. They will have to create the conditions within which they can exercise the right to work and to live as both women and men and as skilled and unskilled workers.

Notes

(1) Munslow, B. 'Proletarianisation in Mozambique' in Munslow, B. and Finch, H. (eds) Proletarianisation in the Third World, Croom Helm, London, 1984, p. 79.

(2) Mintz, S.W. 'The Rural Proletariat and the problem of the Rural Proletarian Consciousness' in Cohen, R. et al (eds) Peasants and Proletarians, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1979, p. 180.

(3) Workers in the mines and on the plantations made their political presence felt by sparking off the decolonisation process in Swaziland through extensive and sustained strike action in the early 1960s. See Halpern, J. South Africa's Hostages, Penguin African Library, London, 1965; Daniel, J. 'The Political Economy of Colonial and Post-Colonial Swaziland' in SALB, Vol. 7, No. 6, April, 1982; Fransman, M. 'Labour, Capital and the State in Swaziland 1962-1977' in SALB, Ibid., 1982.

(4) For purposes of this study, workers employed by multinational capital will be referred to as rural proletarians.

(5) Mintz, S.W. op. cit., p. 175.

(6) Rudra, A. 'In search of the capitalist farmer' in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 4, No. 39, 1970. Although of course this debate can be traced back to Lenin and his criticisms of the Navodnik position in Russia.

(7) Banaji, J. 'For a theory of colonial modes of production in Economic and Political Weekly, December,

1972; and 'Modes of production in a materialist conception of history' in Capital and Class, Vol. 3, 1977.

(8) Alavi, H. 'India and the colonial mode of production' in Millibrand, R. and Saville, J. (eds) The Socialist Register, Merlin Press, London, 1975.

(9) McEachern, D. 'The mode of production in India' in Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 6, 1976.

(10) Bernstein, H. 'Notes on capital and peasantry' in Review of African Political Economy, No. 10, 1977.

(11) Frank, A.G. Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: historical studies of Chile and Brazil, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1967; Latin America: Underdevelopment or revolution, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1969.

(12) Kay, G. Development and Underdevelopment: A Marxist Analysis, Macmillan, London, 1975.

(13) Bernstein, H. and Campbell, B. (eds) Contradictions of Accumulation in Africa, Sage Publications, London, 1985; and Berenstein, H. op. cit.

(14) Cohen, R. 'The Politics of Unemployment in Mauritius', University of the West Indies, Trinidad, 1976; Cohen, R., Copans, J. and Gutkind, P.C.W. (eds) African Labour History, Sage Publications, London, 1978; Cohen, R., Gutkind, P.C.W. and Brazier, P. (eds) Peasants and Proletarians: The Struggles of Third World Workers, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1979; and Cohen, R. 'Resistance and Hidden Forms of Consciousness among African Workers' in ROAPE, No. 19,

1980.

(15) Goodman, D. and Redclift, M. From Peasant to Proletarian, op. cit.

(16) Munslow, B. and Finch, H. (eds) Proletarianisation in the Third World, Croom Helm, London, 1984.

(17) The work of Samir Amin is a typical example of this tendency. See Amin, S. Accumulation on a world scale, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1974; and Unequal Development, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1975.

(18) Sandbrook, R. and Cohen, R. (eds) The Development of an African Working Class, Longman, London, 1975.

(19) Beckman, B. 'Imperialism and Capitalist Transformation: Critique of a Kenyan Debate' in ROAPE, No. 19, 1980.

(20) See Goodman, D. and Redclift, M. op. cit. and Munslow, B. and Finch, H. op. cit. for discussion of this position.

(21) Munslow, B. and Finch, H. op. cit.

(22) Ibid., p. 1.

(23) As a class engaged in an antagonistic relationship with capital in the production of surplus value, without an alternative source of reproduction.

(24) See Castles, S. and Kosack, G. Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe, Oxford University Press, London, 1973; Cohen, R. 'Policing the Frontiers: Regulating the Supplies of Migrant Labour', Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University

of Warwick, 1985.

(25) There is an abundance of literature on this subject, and analyses have shown clearly how the repression of labour has been reflected in the wage structure, especially since the 1930s.

(26) Goodman, D. and Redclift, M. From Peasant to Proletarian, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1981, p. 84.

(27) For a discussion on the possible alliance between the working class and the peasantry, see Lenin, V.I. On the alliance of the Working Class and the Peasantry, Novastic Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1970.

(28) For a brief discussion of the levels of proletarianisation in Swaziland, see Davies, R.H., O'Meara, D. and Dlamini, S. The Kingdom of Swaziland – A Profile, Zed Books, 1985 (Chapter 4).

(29) Burbach, R. and Flynn, P. Agribusiness in the Americas, Monthly Review Press, London, 1980, pp. 12-13.

(30) See Eisenberg, P.L. The Sugar Industry in Pemambucu, 1840-1910, University of California Press, USA, 1974, for an excellent study of the historical development of sugar in Brazil. For an up-to-date analysis of the Brazilian sugar industry see Goodman, D., Sorj, B. and Wilkinson, J. 'Agro-industry, State policy and rural social structures: recent analyses of proletarianisation in Brazilian agriculture' in Munslow, B. and Finch, H. op. cit.

(31) Albert, B. 'The creation of a proletariat on

Peru's Coastal Sugar Plantations 1880-1920' in Munslow and Finch, op. cit.; Scott, C. 'The Labour Process, Class Conflict and Politics in the Peruvian Sugar Industry' in Development and Change, Vol. 10, No. 1, April, 1979; Klaren, P.F. Modernisation, Dislocation and Aprismo: Origins of the Peruvian Aprista Party 1870-1932; Austin, USA, 1973.

(32) See Pearse, A. The Latin American Peasant, Frank Cass, London, 1975.

(33) See Sheridan, R.B. Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies 1623-1775, Baltimore, USA, 1975; Dunn, R.S. Sugar and Slaves: the Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies 1624-1713, Chapel Hill, 1972; Rodney, W. A History of the Guyanese Working People 1881-1905, Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1981; James, C.L.R. The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution (1938) Random House, Vintage Books, New York, 1963.

(34) See Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez Sugar and Society in the Caribbean: An economic history of Cuban Agriculture, New Haven, 1964; Fernando Ortiz, Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar, New York, 1947; Franginals, M.M. The Sugarmill: The Socioeconomic complex of sugar in Cuba 1760-1860, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1976.

(35) See Genovese, E.D. Roll, Jordan, Roll - the World the slaves made, Vintage Books, New York, 1976,

and especially Eisenberg, P.L. op. cit.; Comitas, L. and Lowenthal, D. (eds) Slaves, Free Men, Citizens:West Indian Perspectives, Anchor Books, New York, 1973. There is also a vast additional amount of literature on the subject.

(36) In this study we shall be referring to cane sugar, although we recognise that beet is also a major source of sugar, especially in Europe.

(37) Eisenberg, P.L. op. cit., p. 7.

(38) Ibid., op. cit.

(39) Pearse, A. op. cit., p. 13.

(40) Keith, R.G. Haciendas and Plantations in Latin American History (introduction), Holmes and Meir, INC, USA, 1977, p. 26.

(41) 'Free' in the sense of presenting itself as a commodity on the capitalist labour market. See Marx, K. Capital, Vol. I for a discussion of the concept of 'free' labour. See also Rodney, W. 'Guyana:the making of a labour force' in Race and Class, Vol. XXII, 1981.

(42) Eisenberg, P.L. op. cit., p. 214.

(43) See attached appendix of some of the earlier industrial legislation passed, including the more recent Employment Act of 1980.

(44) See Halpern, J. op. cit., pp. 390-393; also McFadden, P. 'The State and Agribusiness in the Swazi Economy', CODESRIA, 1983.

(45) South African Sugar Year Book, 1976-1977, p. 185.

(46) Natal is largely dominated by the sugar industry.

(47) Swaziland: Eight Year Development Plan, April, 1948 - March, 1956, Mbabane, Swaziland.

(48) This has meant that the 'traditional' vegetable gardens, which were located close to the rivers, have been lost thereby increasing the tendency to drought and starvation in areas of Swazi Nation Land (SNL).

(49) South African Sugar Year Book, 1976-1977.

(50) Data from supplementary questionnaire sent to Ubombo Ranches and other two mills in 1983/84.

(51) See SASYB 1976/77, p. 184 and paper by Virashawmy, R. 'Transnational Corporations in African Agriculture: The case of Mauritius' presented at Conference on Transnational Firms and Agriculture in Africa, CODESRIA, 1981.

(52) 'Sugar Serves the Nation' publication of the Swaziland Sugar Association, 1977.

(53) South African capital, together with British capital, dominate the Swazi economy. See Daniel, J. 'The South African - Swazi State relationship: Ideological harmony and structural domination', AAPS, Senegal, 1983; and Davies, R. et al, op. cit.

(54) 'Ngwenyama' is the title of the Swazi king.

(55) SASYB, 1976/77, p. 187.

(56) Mananga also caters for bureaucrats/managers from many other African countries.

(57) Tropical Africa Advisory Group (TAAG) Fact Finding Mission: Swaziland, 1981, p. 11.

(58) 'Emalangeni' is the unit of currency in

Swaziland which is equivalent to the South African Rand and which is tied to the Rand. In fact, the 'Lilangeni' (singular) is not even legal tender in South Africa, while the South African Rand circulates freely, on par with the Lilangeni in the Swazi economy.

(59) Patrick, D.H. An Economic Survey of Swaziland, 1979, Barclays Bank, Swaziland, p. 9.

(60) 'Swaziland Observer' Newspaper, March 5, 1983.

(61) SASYB, 1976/77, p. 184.

(62) Patrick, D.H., op. cit., p. 10.

(63) 'Sugar Serves the Nation', op. cit., p. 6.

(64) This is presumably because of the shares which Coca-Cola holds in the Simunye venture, although fizzy-drink producers are turning increasingly to cheaper corn-based sucrose.

(65) 'Sugar Serves the Nation', op. cit., p. 7.

(66) See Table on sugar trade value - attached.
See also Davies, R. et al, op. cit.

(67) See Halpern, Daniel, Davies et al, op. cit.

(68) See Dinham, B. and Hines, C. Agribusiness in Africa, Earth Resources Research, London, 1983.

(69) Levin, R. 'Traditional Rulers or Bourgeoisie: Class and Ideology in Swaziland', Working Paper No. 8, University of Liverpool, 1984.

(70) TAAG, op. cit., p. 5.

(71) Halpern, J. op. cit., p. 371.

Notes

(72) Rodney, W. 'Guyana: the making of the labour force' in Race and Class, Vol. XXII, 1981, p. 331. See also The History of the Guyanese Working Class.

(73) Fragninals, M.M. op. cit.

(74) Lincoln, D. 'South African sugar mill labour during the 1970s'. Association of Sociology in Southern Africa, Annual Congress, Masenu, Lesotho, June, 1979, p. 42.

(75) In the case of Mozambique, the experience of Portuguese colonialisation and the use of enslaved labour through the 'contract' made the history of the sugar industry slightly different from that of other sugar producers in the region. For a good analysis of the sugar industry in Mozambique, see J. Head, 'Sena Sugar Estates and Migrant Labour'. Mozambique Studies, Journal of Social Science, Centro de Estudes Africanos, Maputo, P.R.M. 1980.

(76) See Virashawmy, R. 'State Policies and Agriculture in Africa: The Case of Mauritius' presented at CODESRIA Conference on State Policies on Agriculture and Food Production in Africa, Addis Ababa, 1984; Virashawmy, R. 'Transnational Corporations in African Agriculture: The Case of Mauritius'. CODESRIA Working group on Transnational firms and Agriculture in Africa, 1981.

(77) See Dinham, B. and Hines, C. op. cit.

(78) See McFadden, P. 'The State and Agribusiness in the Swazi Economy', CODESRIA, 1983.

(79) The concept of peasantisation has come to mean the incorporation of subsistence producers into capitalist commodity production without direct overall supervision of the production process by capital. See Bernstein, H. 'Notes on Capital and Peasantry'. op. cit.

(80) Wolf, E.R. and Mintz, S.W. 'Haciendas and Plantations', in Haciendas and Plantations in Latin American History, op. cit. p. 51.

(81) Swaziland: Eight Year Development Plan, 1948-56, op. cit. p. 76.

(82) Wolf, E.R. and Mintz, S.W. op. cit. p. 52.

(83) Ibid. p. 53.

(84) The population of Swaziland has always been small relative to other peoples in the region. The last census estimated just over ½ million residents (1984/85).

(85) See Halpern, J. op. cit; Daniel, J. op. cit; First, R. et al, The South African Connection: Western Investment in Apartheid, Penguin, Middlesex, England, 1983 and Seideman, A. and Makgetla, N. Outposts of Monopoly Capital: Southern Africa in the Changing Global Economy, Westport, Lawrence and Co., 1980.

(86) See Booth, A. op. cit.

(87) Davies, R. et al, op. cit. p. 15.

(88) See ROAPE, No. 7, Sep. - Dec. 1976 - Special Issue on South Africa, and Mbiki, T. 'Policies of a New South Africa' in ROAPE, No. 11, 1978.

(89) Davies, R. et al, op. cit. p. 36.

(90) South African (white) commodity agriculture relied extensively on illegal labour from the former High Commission Terrirtories of Bechuanaland, Basatholand and Swaziland, and from Mozambique. See chapter 3 for reference to this phenomenon.

(91) See Kamalkhani, K. 'A Poverty Datum Line Study' in Malkerns; 1982, University of Swaziland; Armstrong, A. and Russell, M. A Situation Analysis of Women in Swaziland, UNICEF/SSRU, Swaziland, 1985. Economic Review and Outlook, Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, Mbabane, Swaziland, January 1986. See also, The Times of Swaziland, 24th February 1987. The overall cost of living in the country rose by 13.1% in 1986.

(92) Davies, R. et al, op. cit. p. 31.

(93) Economic Review and Outlook, op. cit.

(94) Response to Questionnaire, 1983/84.

(95) The child workers are called "Bospanela" which is the slang word for "spanner-boy" or apprentice.

(96) Interviews with workers' leaders, Ubombo Ranches, 1981.

(97) See 'Bitter labour in the Sugarcane Fields', International Report, Issue 3, Vol. 1, No. 3, November, 1983 for an interesting discussion on technological changes in the industry and the implications for labour, especially for cane cutters.

(98) We shall discuss these implications more fully

in relation to working class resistance in the industry in chapter 6.

(99) See Fraginals, M.M. op. cit.

(100) See Burback, R. and Flynn, P. op. cit. and Dinham, B. and Hines, C. op. cit.

(101) See Armstrong, A. and Russell, M. op. cit. and Armstrong, A. and Nhlapo, T. Law and the other Sex: the legal position of women in Swaziland, University of Swaziland, 1985.

(102) This average is calculated on the basis of the completion of a 'task',which is the equivalent of 8 tonnes of cane - approximately 8,000 kilogrammes of cane! It is interesting also that the 'tack' is used to calculate the average wage, when in fact this 'average wage' does not reflect the value of women's work in the fields since they are not involved as cane cutters.

(103) This phenomenon is widespread in the rest of agri-business in Swaziland. For example, see McFadden, P. 'Women in Wage-labour in Swaziland: A focus on agriculture', in South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 6, 1982.

(104) Response to Questionnaire, 1983/84.

(105) "In Africa, with the exception of Swaziland and Tunisia, women account for less than ten per cent of the labour force in manufacturing" Munslow, B. and Finch, H. (eds) Prolitarianisation in the Third World, op. cit. p. 11.

(106) See Davies, et al, op. cit. and Daniel,J.

'The South African - Swazi State Relationship: Ideological harmony and structural domination', AAPS, Senegal, 1983.

(107) Response to Questionnaire, 1983/84.

(108) Economic Review and Outlook, op. cit.

(109) Low, A. Farm Household Theory and Rural Development in Swaziland, Development Study No. 23, University of Reading, 1982.

(110) See Sugar Workers Around the World - Sugar and Sugar Workers, Parts II and III, Popular Report of the International Sugarworker Conference, Canada, February, 1978.

(111) For women workers, this presents a very serious inconvenience and embarrassment especially during menstruation.

(112) Annual Report, Labour Department, Swaziland Government, 1980, p. 36.

(113) Ibid, 1980.

(114) See Engels, F. Condition of the Working Class in England, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973.

(115) Annual Report, Labour Department, Swaziland Government, 1980, p. 35.

(116) Ibid, 1976, p. 12.

(117) 'Bitter Labour in the Sugarcane Fields', op. cit. p. 7.

(118) Ibid. p. 7.

(119) Ibid. p. 7.

(120) See Armstrong, A. and Nhlapo, R.T. op. cit. and see also Swaziland Employment Act, 1980.

(121) Response to Questionnaire, 1983/84.

(122) Poor and inadequate conditions of work and living characterise the industry in the region as a whole. For example, see Ardington, Tony 'Factors affecting wages and Employment in the South African Sugar Industry', Paper No. 43, SALDRU, Farm Labour Conference, September 1976; Cook, Allen Akin to Slavery: Prison labour in South Africa, IDAF, London, 1982.

Chapter Six

Forms of Resistance and Consciousness Among Workers in the Swazi Sugar Industry

"Cane Cutters' Lament"

It's good for them to come,
the strike breakers;
And taste of the back-breaking labour,
The scratch and itch of burnt cane leaves,
The sweat and grime, the blistering sun,
The monotony of cutting bundles of cane,
Hundreds, thousands, millions,
Merrily they come, in their trucks,
But comrade, just for one day.

Will each endure, for weeks and weeks,
Will they take the drenching rains
Pouring into our plates,
Washing away the simple taste
Of a scanty meal
Cooked by weary sleepy wives,
Long before the first cock's crow,
Going long distances on foot,
Before the crack of dawn,
To bone weary labour,
The daily pattern of our lives?
Will they never have cause to strike?
What then?

Now the time has come.
Our spirits cringe at so small a reward
And we stand firm,
That justice must have its fill.
All we ask, a fellow feeling,
From those who enjoy.
All the good things they eat and have,
From sugar made - and gained,
That they understand
Our desparate need
For a better life,
A better wage and some more.
The hope of reward -
Sweetens the hardest labour. (1)

In the discussion of the forms of resistance and consciousness which have characterised the struggle between labour and capital in the sugar industry in Swaziland over the last three decades, several important theoretical issues come to the fore which require classification. As in the previous chapter (5) we will try to relate our theoretical propositions and arguments to the concrete situation of workers in the industry, with particular reference to the Ubombo Ranches company. We will use the interviews with the two workers' leaders referred to earlier as the main source of reference, as well as observations and comments by the researchers while in the field during the collection of the data. No distinction will be made between agricultural and industrial workers in the analysis of the

various forms which resistance and consciousness have assumed in the struggle with capital.

To have a clear understanding of the phenomenon of resistance and consciousness, it is necessary first of all to realise that these are not two different issues, but rather are two sides of the same process. Resistance is an expression of consciousness, and consciousness is necessarily a consequence of resistance against capitalist aggression and exploitation. Therefore, not only must we locate the analysis within a context which treats these forms as a process which is both dialectical and historically specific, but also we must relate these forms to the very process of proletarianisation and class struggle. It is within and as part of the process of proletarianisation that the working class formulates ways of resistance which reflect a consciousness through which the struggle against capital is waged.

The forms which resistance assumes and its manifestation as an awareness on the part of the working class of its historic role in the transformation of capitalist society, must be seen in relation to the concrete material conditions of production and class struggle. Resistance and consciousness are not merely forms of expression. They are historically concrete expressions of the antagonistic relationship between labour and capital and are responses to the repression and exploitation which capital imposes upon the producing classes. More importantly, they are demands for a new and different society, a socialist society.

Past works on resistance and consciousness in Africa have tended to use what Robin Cohen describes as "formula dichotomies" whose "...methodological limitations...have led to an over-emphasis on data which has been easily accessible to measurement, and which has also been familiar and comprehensible within the framework of accepted Marxist theory."(2) The work by Cohen marks an important step forward in the formulation of a clearer understanding of the African working classes as classes actively engaged in on-going struggles with capital in different ways and at different times.

Although no explicit reference is made in his article to Gramsci's work, and especially to his idea of hegemony, it is clear that Cohen's work and ideas are located within the important tradition of Gramscian thought.(3) The importance of Gramsci's work and ideas in the elucidation and strengthening of the materialist conception of history and class struggles is undisputed. In terms of our attempt to understand the struggles of sugar workers in Swaziland, we will apply his concept of hegemony to bring out the significance of 'traditional' ideology and its use by the Swazi state and Multinational Capital to control the Swazi workers. "Hegemony in this sense might be defined as an 'organising principle', or world-view...that is diffused by agencies of ideological control and socialisation into every area of daily life. To the extent that this prevailing consciousness is internalised by the broad masses, it becomes part of 'common sense'; as all ruling elites seek to perpetuate

their power, wealth and status, they necessarily attempt to popularise their own philosophy, culture, morality etc., and render them unchallengeable, part of the natural order of things."(4)

Although it is very clear from Cohen's work that any analysis of resistance and consciousness (in the Third World) must take into consideration both covert and overt forms, we shall not make a distinction between these two categories in our analysis, simply because we would like to present the process at a general level.

In the case of Swaziland, there has not been any specific study of the phenomena of resistance and consciousness in any sector of the working class. Studies by Fransman, Levin, Davies et al have only touched very briefly on the most obvious expressions of resistance - the strikes of the early 1960s and late 1970s.(5) This work also falls short of the requirements of such a task and we shall give only a brief and rather sectional discussion of the working class in the sugar industry.

Factors influencing the forms and character of resistance in Swaziland

Several factors have influenced the character of resistance against capital by Swazi workers. There are historical politico - economic and ideological factors over which the Swazi workers have had little influence or control. These are the proletarianisation of a large section of the Swazi working class outside the country in South Africa; colonial repression which culminated in the 1963 strikes and the disbandment of trade unions; the

institutionalisation of traditional ideological structures and functionaries and its use as a means of worker control; the dominance of commodity agriculture and the tendency for labour to be seasonal and casual; declining conditions of reproduction in the subsistence sector and the steady outflow of labour into commodity agriculture, and, the persistence of racist attitudes and racial tensions in production, especially in the sugar industry. This does not imply that the workers have not responded accordingly. In fact, Swazi workers have become increasingly militant in the face of intensive capitalist domination of the economy and are fighting back.

The period of the early 1960s marked a new era in the struggle against capital by Swazi workers. Many workers had returned to Swaziland from South Africa because of the intensification of the national liberation struggle in that country and the resulting crisis which confronted the racist regime at that time.[6] They brought back a militancy learned in the mines of South Africa, which they translated into political action, beginning with strikes at the Havelock Asbestos Mine as early as 1948.[7] "Then, in 1962, there took place at the CDC - Courtaulds Usutu Pulp Company mill the first strike to centre on trade-union organisation. In short, sharp but total strikes, the workers gained the reinstatement of men dismissed because of their part in trying, quite legally, to form a trade union, and also achieved a hearing at last for their grievances about pay and living conditions. Later in 1962 and early 1963, short

but total strikes took place in the forestry industry at Peak Timbers and amongst workers building Swaziland's new railway."(8)

Although the proletarianisation of large numbers of Swazi workers outside the Swazi economy has meant that the Swazi proletariat does not have a 'common' tradition of organisation and struggle against capital within the country, the experiences of proletarianisation in South Africa have been more intense and richer, and have clearly had an important influence on the character of struggles by Swazi workers. "Contrary to what most local whites believed, Swazi workers had, however, been dissatisfied long before politicians vocalised their grievances. Indeed, until 1963, labour relations in Swaziland were reminiscent of the early industrial revolution in England."(9)

But workers had been organising themselves into Trade Unions as is reflected in Appendix III. The strongest unions were in large scale commodity agriculture i.e. the Swaziland Citrus Plantation Union, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union, and the Swaziland Pulp and Timber Workers Union and in the mining industry (Swaziland Miners and General Workers Union). The 1960s saw the full expression of workers' action against colonial repression, capitalist exploitation and the complicity of the Swazi aristocracy. It is interesting but not coincidental that the workers at Ubombo Ranches were in the forefront of these battles. The strikes at Ubombo Ranches and neighbouring white farms (Swaziland

Plantations and Bar Circle Ranch) in March 1963, preceded the national strike of May the same year, when sugar workers joined workers from the mines and railways to openly confront the colonial state and its collaborators. The strikes at Ubombo Ranches in March were sparked off by the atrocious conditions under which workers had to live and work. Describing the situation, Halpern had this to say. "An official board of enquiry subsequently found that in March 1963 most workers of the Ubombo Ranches group still had to 'house' themselves in self-erected hovels, with no sanitation, and to use water unfit for human consumption. Wages were even lower than those in South Africa. The basic wage for an unskilled recruit was 2s. 1d. a day plus rations, with a complicated system of attendance and later incentive bonuses. Irrigation workers, who worked twelve-hour day or night shifts, earned a basic wage of only £4. 7s. 0d. a month, with rations, housing and medical attention which the company valued at another £4. 8s. 0d. Where incentive bonuses operated for semi-skilled work, these earnings could be increased, but labour relations were so poor that the bonus and quota fixing system generated more hostility than satisfaction."(10) 2,500 men and women were involved in this action, and in spite of the absence of any violence on the part of the striking workers, many workers and their leaders were arrested and either jailed or sacked. The colonial state repressed the strike very forcefully and subsequently passed a proclamation of regulations to cover labour disputes in the economy.

The demand for a general enquiry into the low wages received by Swazi workers in the country, for an improvement of the intolerable working conditions and a fixed national minimum wage, united the workers from the sugar industry and surrounding white farms, and from the Havelock Asbestos Mine in May of that same year. The colonial state responded by unleashing all the repressive mechanisms at its disposal, including the use of white settlers as police. The final repressive action was the bringing in of a battalion of British soldiers from Kenya (the Gordon Highlanders) to "restore law and order" in the colony. Halpern notes that the strike was most successful where the employers had used repression and violence against workers in an effort to prevent the formation of Trade Unions.

In the sugar industry, the 1963 strike was a highpoint in the ongoing battle between labour and capital. The industry had been established in 1958, and barely five years later, the proletariat was challenging capital and the colonial state in an open demand for basic working rights. More importantly, the sugar workers had made the link with workers in mining, the oldest capitalist industry in the country, and the colonial state resorted to force to cope with the challenge from labour. "The strike permanently shattered the image of the urban Swazi as a happy, complacent lot of people satisfied to let their lives be run by their king, the British administration and white employers."(11)

One of the consequences of the 1963 strike was the

disbandment of the Trade Union movement across the country, with the exception of the Swaziland Bank Workers Union.[12] Most trade union leaders and prominent workers' leaders were jailed and subsequently sacked from their jobs, and some were 'bought-off' by the state and the companies.[13] Workers who showed any interest in trade union organising were threatened with dismissal. In the place of trade unions, capital together with the neo-colonial state and the traditional aristocracy, imposed 'traditional' functionaries (the induna and ndabazabantu) upon the workers, and through the so-called workers' councils, has sought to control and intimidate the Swazi working class. We shall discuss this phenomenon more fully below.

In the aftermath of the strike and the state repression which followed, the need arose to analyse the character of the trade union leadership in both industries (sugar and asbestos) and its relationship to the nationalist organisation, in this case, the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC) with which the trade unions co-operated during this period. None of the studies of Swaziland labour struggles has raised this question adequately, and due to time constraints we are unable to make a full analysis of this question either. Suffice to say that the fragmentation and repression of the trade union movement which followed the strike, and the fact that the links between the trade unions and this particular nationalist movement were not rebuilt, points to the need for trade unions to analyse very carefully the kinds of alliances they make with broad nationalist

movements. This is especially important in a situation where the trade unions are young and trying to consolidate their strength as workers' organisations.

In the case of Swaziland, the alliance with the NNLC had very serious consequences for the workers and for trade unionism generally in the country. The absence of trade unions for the last twenty years and their replacement with workers' councils in most industries,(14) meant that workers in Swaziland have been deprived of the experience of trade union organisation.

It also raises the question about the use of the strike as a weapon of struggle by workers against capital. In the sugar industry, there have been several strikes, the main ones being in 1963 and 1979. In the latter case, it was sparked off by the withdrawal of the bonus. According to the workers, "When they stopped the end of year bonus for daily paid workers (in 1977) we were not told, nor were we given any notice that we would not be receiving it. And, it was a year when we were really looking forward to the bonus because the crop was very good, and we had cut more tons of cane than usual...The strike and troubles of 1979 were the culmination of grievances which began with the denial of the 1977 bonus. We were not paid the bonus at the end of a very good year...We still want the money owed to us all these years since 1977."(15) In both cases, workers were 'beaten back' by the state and the company, and they suffered serious reprisals in the aftermath of their action. In our discussion with the workers' leaders at

Ubombo Ranches on these issues, they were very clear that there was a serious problem which needed to be overcome. They were both of the opinion that in their experience strikes had not led to any real gains for the workers, and had in fact laid them open to attack by both the state and the company. In response to the question "Do you think that the 1979 strike was useless or do you think that the strike can be a useful means to enable workers to make some gains?" one of the workers replied; "The way I see it, a strike is not a nice thing. It is something that brings sorrow and hunger and lots of other unpleasant things. But, the strikes will not stop if things continue the way they are, because the main reason, I can say, is that we do not have someone to listen to the grievances of the workers, to listen to everything we say. Instead of listening to our grievances they like to hear how much we are suffering." I then asked him whether the strike could not be used to show the bosses that the workers are angry, and he replied "Honestly speaking, I would agree that there is a way in which the strike is useful, where it can be used to frighten the bosses where there already is a workers' organisation. But we are still in the dark, we do not have an organisation, therefore the strike is not of any use in these circumstances. In fact, once we go on strike, they have a chance to attack us." (my emphasis)

Asked about leadership among the workers in the industry, he replied "I can say that the British took it with them when they gave us independence...In 1963...the

workers did have leaders, but even those leaders were leaders because they knew how to talk, God had given them the gift of speech so that when they spoke the workers heard them. But there was no central organisation from which all actions and considerations for the workers could be planned. Even now, we don't have a central organisation (Indlunkhulu) which deals with the workers' interests, where the workers can take their problems and which protects workers' interests...they (the Government) do show us where we can take our grievances to, but when you look carefully, you find that it is the management to whom they refer us. The very management which is oppressing the people".

Another consequence of the 1979 strike for the workers at Ubombo Ranches, was that they were totally deprived even of the right to apply for permission to meet and discuss their problems.

Prior to 1979, workers could hold meetings and decide on issues which their representatives would take to the company management or to the Labour Department. The workers recounted incidents when they had demanded audiences with various government officials and how the anger of the workers over general conditions of work and low wages was very evident during these occasions. They provided us with a wealth of information about the collaboration between the state and the company, and talked at length about the various machinations which the company uses to try and divide the workers. One of which is the 'sweetening' of workers' representatives by

giving them privileges and making them feel at ease with the management.

After the ILO began to put pressure on the Swazi state in the early 1980s to allow trade union activity, the workers at Ubombo Ranches began to prepare themselves through underground organisation. This led us to another issue - that of the seasonality of labour in the industry and how this characteristic affects the mobilisation of workers into a union.

The emergence of a proletariat in the sugar industry which is largely seasonal, unskilled and semi-skilled and receiving very low wages, has posed several problems in terms of its mobilisation and organisation. In particular, the tendency for the proletariat to be seasonal makes unionisation difficult, and creates loopholes for the denial of trade union rights by the state. Having conceded to the demands of the ILO to allow trade union activity, the Swazi state made registration of a union conditional upon its representation of at least forty per cent of the work force. Because of the seasonality of labour and the very character of work in the industry, sugar workers had to find a way of 'stabilising' the prospective union membership. At Ubombo Ranches the workers' leaders explained how they planned to overcome this problem.

First of all, they rejected the separation made by the company between agricultural and industrial workers, and were recruiting members from both groups. Secondly, they were recruiting members from among the seasonal

workers as well. "Yes, even the seasonal workers can be members of the Trade Union, except that when he/she goes home, he/she must inform the secretary of that section, to say that the job is finished. When they leave, they are given letters so that when we need to meet with the members, they come back with the letters. This makes it possible for us to know who is away and when they think that they will be back at work."(16)

The recruitment of members would be extended to include workers on the nearby estates and outgrower schemes. "We are determined to include all those workers because we consider them as members. That is how we see them...Once the government gives us the go ahead and recognises the trade union, then we will recruit those workers more easily. Even now, we are trying our best, it is difficult, but we have decided that the best strategy is that Ubombo Ranches Company workers must push for the largest target and get recognised. Once that is done, our workers will then talk with the workers on the plantations to join us, and the support will come from the workers themselves."(17)

As shown in Appendix IV, most of the estates surrounding the mill are owned by white settlers whose forefathers were concessionaires who grabbed large areas of land at the beginning of this century. Conditions of life for the workers are atrocious, worse even than at Ubombo Ranches "The conditions are worse. The workers are still living in grass houses, you have to build your own house. When you get employed, the boss gives you about a

week to build the house where you will be staying. You get paid for that week, but if you don't finish building the room within the given time, then you have to work on it after work...For example, we can show you the Todd compound. He is a millionaire, a big man, but the terrible conditions under which his workers live will shock you. They live in grass houses, and now that it is the rainy season, they pray that the rain doesn't come. Because when it rains, they can't sleep. They have to stand on their feet until dawn."(18) With the price of sugar falling to its lowest in the mid-1980s, one can only assume that these conditions have not changed for the better, and have probably worsened. The workers on the estates were completely at the mercy of the planters. "The planters do as they please. The Wages Council and the Ministry of Agriculture do nothing for those workers, they are separated from the workers here at the mill. The Wages Council deals only with workers here in the industry, only in the mill, not the cane cutters. They don't even know what grade they are, what grade a cane cutter is, or an irrigation worker is, etc. They know nothing."(19)

The workers hoped to use the Trade Union also to fight against child labour. They were very critical of this practice. "These people supposedly came to this country to civilise us, they are supposed to have all the knowledge, they should be educating our children, but they are destroying us...They came to develop our country? They encourage you as an adult to hire children and say they will feed the children. What kind of thing is that...

Where are we going as a nation?" (20)

Therefore, while the workers recognised the importance of the strike as a class weapon, they had also learnt from bitter experience that without a strong trade union organisation in the industry and throughout the country, workers were vulnerable to all sorts of reprisals and sanctions after a strike. The success of a strike was measured in terms of how effectively the workers were able to defend themselves against state and company reprisals.

The workers described other occasions of confrontation which were clearly examples of class action against capital. These took the form of daily challenges against racism in the industry, lock-outs of racist management staff and sit-downs or go-slows in the fields during peak harvest time. These actions seemed to be spontaneous and involved large numbers of workers from both sections. For example, in one case the mill manager sacked a worker on the spot for alleged laziness. "After that, the workers met that very day, we don't know how they met, even we the representatives were surprised. In the morning when we came to work, we found that the workers had blocked the main gate through which the management cars enter, and the workers demanded that the "gentleman" who had sacked the worker the day before not enter the premises. Instead, he must fetch the worker whom he had sacked and return with him. Well, the man fetched the worker and brought him back to work. He was re-employed. After that incident, things began to

happen."(21)

The workers recounted various examples of racist behaviour by the company and its white staff who are mainly South African and British. Since the late 1970s many senior positions in the company at Ubombo Ranches, as well as at the other two mills, have been taken up by "white Rhodesians" who left Zimbabwe just before and soon after independence. These people are generally very racist, and have brought with them attitudes and behaviour which is reflective of their white settler mentality and background. The workers at Ubombo Ranches complained bitterly about unfair work practices where they virtually had to teach some white man the job and yet he was receiving a salary many times higher than the workers were paid. The 1979 strike over the withdrawal of the bonus was precipitated by a racist statement made by the managing director of the company to the workers' representatives during a meeting. "He wanted to know why we wanted more money (an increase) because anyway, we spend fifty per cent of our wages on alcohol! That statement was the cause of much resentment among the workers, it became a big thorn in the flesh of the workers."(22)

There were also accounts of how white employees of the company, especially South Africans and "Rhodesians" demanded that workers call them 'boss'.(23) When workers refused to comply, they would be punished for 'impertinence' by being moved from the job and made to cut grass around the company offices, for example. In the early 1960s, Halpern said this of Ubombo Ranches Company. "Very strict

and often arbitrary discipline operated, assaults by supervisors on workers occurred, and any failure to perform a set task was penalised by pay deductions or stoppage of rations."(24) Although such behaviour is no longer as rampant in the company, workers complained of behaviour and attitudes by white employees which caused much resentment among Swazi workers. "To tell the truth, it is the white man who causes tension between us and them."(25)

To counter company and state repression, the workers have developed various strategies which include strong support networks. For example, they raised funds to bail out and assist workers who had been arrested and prosecuted during and after the 1979 strike, and also tried to provide some assistance for the families of workers who were jailed or sacked as a result of the strike. In response to the question "So would you say that the strike brought you (the workers) together?" he replied "yes, it did bring us together, because even now we are fighting for the division between industrial and agricultural workers to be removed."(26) In relation to the attempts by the management to use this separation of the workers to undermine the solidarity among them, he said "The management divides us, because they want to cause disharmony among us. Sometimes you find that in some months workers in industry (sugar processing) have more benefits than the agricultural workers. But the workers are united. For example, on the day of the strike (1979) they came from the fields, on foot. They had left their

compounds at about 9.30 at night, to come to the mill, and by morning they were all assembled at the mill." I then asked him "Is there a grape-vine among the workers?" and he replied "Yes, there is a way of communicating between us. If we want to meet we have various ways of meeting, although we know that it is illegal. But at present, since the strike, I can almost say we are one, because even the field workers, if there is something they don't like, they come quickly to the chairman (sic) to get clarification and information. We too, when there is an issue which requires a decision and we are not sure, we try to get in touch with them."(27)

It was therefore clear that the workers at Ubombo Ranches were very conscious of their position as an oppressed and exploited class, and they were fighting back in every possible way. For example, in the absence of trade union structures, the workers elected their own representatives whom they could vote out of power if they felt they were no longer doing the job they had been chosen for. These representatives, and the chairperson of the representatives was one of our interviewees, sat on the workers' council, in the company board meetings and on the wages council. The company had tried various subtefuges to get the most articulate representatives to "sell-out", but as one of the workers' leaders put it "Yes, it is true that money is the root of all evil, because even among the daily paid workers, you find some who do strange things. But now it is very difficult for anyone to try anything (like betraying other workers).

because since the suffering after the 79 strike, after all the suffering that the workers have been through, there is a great solidarity among the workers. And anyone trying something against the other workers knows that if he or she is known or found out, it's very possible that the next morning all the workers will be standing at the gate and refuse that person entry into the work place. That is what has led to minimal co-operation between daily paid workers and the company on that level."(28)

Below is the reproduction of an interesting excerpt from the interview with the two workers' leaders which brings out very clearly the strategies and tactics of struggle workers at Ubombo Ranches had adopted within their prevailing circumstances in the early 1980s. Following on the last quoted comment, one of the workers' leaders added; "Yes, the workers are united now. They are one so much so that we, the representatives, are being accused of politicking. Therefore, I think that this will be the second year running that the management tells the workers to re-elect their representatives because the company does not want the current representatives. First of all they said no more representatives. Then they realised that workers would not be represented on the various boards and councils. So they told the workers to have new elections. And the workers returned the same representatives. Again this year, the representatives have been called by the management and told that they are no longer acceptable to the company. The workers have replied that they do not want other representatives and

that the current people are their choice. They told us to go and tell the management that this year (1981) they don't even want an election, and all the representatives were returned without having to be voted into office."

In response to the question "Can the representatives be elected for several consecutive terms without being rejected by the company?" the workers replied; "Yes, we have tried to keep the same people who represent the workers' interests for as long as possible, because the company wants the representatives to change all the time, so that when you come as a new representative, and you try to say something, the company management can deny that that matter was ever discussed. In that case, if one is an experienced representative, you can refer to your minutes, because one of the main problems we have faced since this company was formed, was that we did not have any means of proving our point. You see, it happens that a representative is eloquent and knows how to argue, etc., and the workers become happy and elect that person to represent them. Then when you get to the meetings, the company humiliate you by asking you, for instance, if you know when a certain issue was discussed, or when a certain decision was taken. And you don't know because they (the management) have hidden the files. So the people realised that, although we are not highly educated, we needed to outwit them (the management). Now they can't trick us with that. We know what issues were discussed, when, and we keep our own minutes too. So when they try to deny it, we have our minutes to refer to."[29]

In these ways the workers at Ubombo Ranches have been able to wage an ongoing struggle against capital and the neo-colonial state. The gains have been small, but the fact that workers continue to struggle even in such conditions of repression and intimidation is a clear refutation of the myth which the Swazi state would like to project of a "peaceful" labour force in that country.

The use of 'traditional' ideology as a means of worker control

Finally, one of the most significant factors which has influenced the character of resistance and consciousness among Swazi workers is that of traditional ideology. Traditional ideology is a set of socio-cultural beliefs and attitudes which underly the political system and express essentially pre-capitalist class and gender relations. "By hegemony Gramsci meant the permeation throughout civil society...of an entire upturn of values, attitudes, beliefs, morality, etc., that is in one way or another supportive of the established order and the class interests that dominate it."(30) In the case of Swaziland, these beliefs and attitudes assume an essentially anti-proletarian and patriarchal form. Because of the collaborative relationship between the colonial state and the traditional aristocracy,(31) traditional ideology was largely maintained, especially through rituals and ceremonies which emphasised the power and ideological hegemony of the Swazi monarch.(32)

The neo-colonial state has since 1969 institutionalised many aspects of traditional ideology as

capitalist state ideology, and it has become a means through which the petty bourgeoisie reaffirms its relationship with the traditional aristocracy on the one hand, and a weapon of working class and peasant repression on the other.

Encouraged by the repressive actions of the colonial government against the workers in the early 1960s, the petty bourgeois regime which took control in 1969, declared that trade unions were "foreign" and "un-Swazi", and were therefore unacceptable. In their place, the regime created Works Councils and Wages Councils.(33) To reinforce and institutionalise these structures within industry, the state together with capital, especially in the sugar industry, imposed a functionary of the monarchy upon the workers. This is the Ndabazabantu. "The Ndabazabantu is appointed by the King to advise the Company in all matters pertaining to Swazi Law and Custom and to ensure that every effort is made to establish harmony and good working relations.(34)

As Simelane succinctly put it "For all intents and purposes Ndabazabantu was to take the place of a union in the work place representing workers on matters ranging from grievances to conditions of work including the negotiation of wages. In addition, Ndabazabantu was supposed to make sure that the demands of the workers were not excessive."(35) In this way, capital and the neo-colonial state hoped to repress working class consciousness and minimise the demands and activities of workers throughout the economy.

In the sugar industry, capital has used this system

to try to divide the working class. Separate Works Councils were set up by the companies for Hourly and Daily paid industrial workers, "...to provide an effective channel of communication between employees and Management on matters of mutual interest in order to promote understanding and to secure the fullest measure of co-operation for the achievement of all Company objectives undertaken in the interests of both Employees and Management."(36) (my emphasis) For the agricultural workers, "The Company...set up a Council of Elders known as the Libandla (Works Council) at each village, elected by the employees to assist in dealing with all matters of mutual interest."(37)

At Ubombo Ranches we interviewed both the agricultural workers and the two workers' leaders about their attitudes towards the Ndabazabantu and the system he represents. We found that the Ndabazabantu was the most unpopular person in the company, and he was completely identified with capital. He was referred to as "Ndabazabelungu"(38) and the workers expressed strong resentment at his collaboration with the company in undermining their efforts to struggle effectively against capital.

The Ndabazabantu also plays a devisive role among the workers, isolating them from each other and showing preferential treatment to some workers. Asked about the connection between the political and economic roles of a trade union and workers' struggles generally, the workers' leaders responded thus; "Well, I would say that

there are differences among the workers about this issue, because some workers do not see the relevance of our protests about things like the Ndabazabantu and how he is against us. Others in fact like to have him because when some workers go to him he makes an effort to solve that person's problem and things work out for that person. But you also find that if you are among the unlucky ones, he just ignores you and sends you away."(39)

While the workers were clearly aware of the repressive role of the state and the functions of the Ndabazabantu within the industrial machinery, they did not really question his presence in the industry as a representative of the King. They insulted him and were resentful of his presence, but when asked why they did not remove him, they answered "No, we cannot because we did not choose him. He was sent here by the King."(40) They made a distinction between the state (and government and its ministries or departments) and the traditional aristocracy. In a discussion about the relevance of tradition to the workers and the society, the more senior of the two workers' leaders explained why he chose tradition vis-a-vis modernisation. "Because it is clear that with this modernisation, we have no future. All that we have achieved so far is nothing without tradition. If we had held on to our traditions, life, the world, would be moving a little slower. But with this civilisation, we will soon be dead, just as we are already dying."(41) He went on to agree with the monarch (Sobhuza II) that "...we must choose that which we think can suit us, will

not be in conflict with our beliefs, from these foreign civilisations...and we must come with the tradition,"(42) an argument which interestingly has been used by the reactionary neo-colonial regime to deny workers their right to struggle because it is "un-Swazi" and against the Swazi traditions. While on the one hand the rejection of "modernisation" and "foreign civilisations" could be understood as a rejection of capitalism and capitalist exploitation, on the other hand, the insistence on the maintenance of "tradition" - understood as pre-capitalist class and gender politics and culture, is a clear reflection of the significant influence traditional ideology still has over working class consciousness. The uncritical acceptance of 'Swazi tradition' as defined by the monarchy and implemented by the neo-colonial state raises serious questions about the effects of pre-capitalist culture on the development of a proletarian culture in the particular circumstances of Swazi society.

One can further conclude that in fact the rejection of strikes as a weapon of struggle was not only for the reasons given above, but also because ideologically the strike has been defined as 'foreign' by the ruling classes, and therefore un-Swazi. Therefore, even when the workers expressed resentment at the presence of the Ndabazabantu and were in constant battle with him as a representative of capital, they did not challenge his presence as a representative of the monarchy.

For women workers in the industry and in the society generally, the implications and consequences of traditional

ideology go beyond the sexual harassment and abuse in relation to what they wear or where they can or cannot go in the society.[43] It extends to a fundamental denial of the right to work in certain industries i.e. processing of sugar cane and in mining,[44] denial of the right to mobility especially in terms of travel abroad, and even the right to vote in the sham elections sometimes held at the whims of the regime.

In our interviews with women workers at Ubombo Ranches, we asked them if they were given a chance to express their grievances and demands. Only eighty four women answered the question and of these, sixteen said yes, forty two said no, and twenty six said they were not sure. Of the forty three women who answered the question "Are you satisfied with the way in which grievances are dealt with?" only eleven women answered yes, and the rest (thirty two) answered in the negative. Interestingly, when asked to give reasons for their disatisfaction with the grievances procedure, 120 women answered that they were discriminated against by the existing system. 103 out of 133 women answered that there were grievances specific to women, relating to maternity leave, wages, being forced to stop work earlier than men because the jobs they were given were short-term, and the long hours of work and lack of adequate sanitary facilities, among other things. But none of the women ventured to suggest a possible solution to these problems, except to say that their problems were ignored and that meetings were not permitted. Asked if they would take alternative employment if the opportunity

arose, 153 women out of a total of 165 answered yes.

The absence of a trade union organisation in the sugar industry (and in the country generally) has not only denied workers the experience of organised struggle and the means to mobilise and conscientise workers about their interests as a class, it has also entrenched gender inequalities among workers in the process of struggle. There were no women leaders among the workers' representatives, and women respondents tended to shy away from answering directly political questions.(45) The articulation of feminist demands was nascent and unsure although very present, especially during informal discussions after the questionnaires had been completed. Then, the women tended to be more articulate about questions of maternity leave, the job insecurity and problems of being seasonal workers, especially in relation to housing and income.

The deeper significance of traditional ideology and its manipulation by the neo-colonial state and by capital in the repression of the working people (both workers and peasants) in Swazi society requires serious analysis. This brief analysis of the forms of resistance and consciousness among sugar workers in Swaziland indicates a close dialectical relationship between overt and covert forms of struggle. Every struggle is shaped and coloured by the existing material conditions and by the historical processes which preceded them, as well as by the conscious efforts of the oppressed classes to change their conditions of life. Therefore, the choice of weapons of

struggle by the Swazi workers will depend upon their own assessment of the situation as it unfolds and will reflect the levels of consciousness they have reached in the struggle for a new and just social order.

Notes

(1) Cane Cutters' Lament - by Juliet Correia in Sugar and Sugar Workers - A popular Report of the International Sugar Workers Conference, Part 2. - att-Fly, Canada, February 1978, p. 8.

(2) Cohen, R. "Resistance and Hidden Forms of Worker Consciousness" in ROAPE, No. 19, 1980. See also J. Crisp A Story of An African Working Class: Ghanaian Miners' Struggles 1870-1980, Zed, London, 1984 (especially preface by Professor Robin Cohen).

(3) Cohen's work seems to be a response to Gramsci's critique of contemporary socialist thought on the need to understand and take into consideration the more subtle ideological machinations of the capitalist system.

(4) Boggs, C. Gramsci's Marxism, Pluto Press, London, 1976, p. 38.

(5) See Fransman, M; Levin, J; Daniels, J; Davies, R. et al.

(6) See Slovo, J. 'South Africa: no middle road', in Basil Davidson et al Southern Africa: the new politics of revolution, Penguin, London, 1976. Also, Luckhardt, K. and Wall, B. Organise or Starve, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1980.

(7) Halpern, J. South Africa's Hostages, Penguin Books, London, 1965.

(8) Ibid. p. 371. See also Simelane, N. "Evolving Role and Status of Trade Unions in Swaziland" International Conference on Trade Unions and National

Development in Southern Africa, Institute of Labour Studies, Lesotho, 1981.

(9) Halpern, op. cit. p. 370.

(10) Ibid. p. 371. In 1979, the withdrawal of the bonus sparked off large scale strikes at Ubombo Ranches.

(11) Ibid. p. 378.

(12) This is an essentially 'white collar' union which has never posed any real threat to capital.

(13) Some of the younger trade unionists were offered a soft option either to go abroad for further studies or to join the King's party. See Fransman, M. "The State and Development in Swaziland 1960-1977" Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sussex, 1978.

(14) Many employers, especially in smaller enterprises, refused even to allow the establishment of workers' councils.

(15) The 'end of year' bonus was different from the weekly attendance bonus. The latter bonus is an extra payment for having worked all week without abstentions.

(16) Interview with workers' leaders, Ubombo Ranches, 1981.

(17) Ibid.

(18) Ibid. G. Todd is the son of K. Todd referred to in chapter 4.

(19) Ibid.

(20) Ibid.

(21) Ibid.

(22) Ibid..

(23) This is a term which accords a racial superiority

to a white person, usually a white male. It is specific to South Africa/Southern Africa and reflects the unequal relationship between white and black and between employer and employee.

(24) Halpern, op. cit. p. 371.

(25) Interview with workers' leaders, Ubombo Ranches, 1981.

(26) Ibid.

(27) Ibid.

(28) Ibid.

(29) Ibid.

(30) Bogg, C. Gramsci's Marxism, op. cit. p. 39.

(31) Traditional ideology is generally reactionary and repressive vis-a-vis the working class and its interests.

(32) See Kuper, H. An African Aristocracy: Rank Among the Swazi, Oxford University Press, London, 1969, and The Swazi: A South African Kingdom, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1963.

(33) See Annual Report, Labour Department, Swaziland Government.

(34) Mhlume (Swaziland) Sugar Company Limited, Personnel Procedure No. 2. Revised 1st August, 1975, Industrial Relations Procedure.

(35) Simelane, N. op. cit. p. 7.

(36) Mhlume (Swaziland) Sugar Company Limited, Personnel Procedure No. 2, op. cit.

(37) Ibid.

(38) 'Ndabazabelungu' maans 'white man's business' or 'white man's representative.'

(39) Ibid.

(40) Ibid.

(41) Ibid.

(42) Ibid.

(43) Women are not allowed to enter the 'royal kraal' at Lobamba through a certain entrance because they are supposedly unclean i.e. an allusion to menstruation as an unclean process. They are also discouraged from going into bars which are seen as "corrupting" for women but quite acceptable to men.

(44) See Armstrong, A. and Nhlapo, R.T. Law and the other sex: the legal position of women in Swaziland, University of Swaziland, 1985. See also The Employment Act 1980, Swaziland Government, Swaziland.

(45) Although male respondents also hesitated in answering such sensitive questions, most (155) conceded the right of women to attend meetings.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing work has, we hope, achieved some of the objectives set out in the introduction, and in the process, we have tried to raise several issues which we think are important and should serve as a catalyst for further analyses of the Swazi working class and Swazi society in general.

The important advances which have been made by progressive social science, especially in relation to the formulation and application of concepts which bring to the fore the important gender and class issues in the analyses of any social formation, have resulted in a richer and more politically relevant social science. They have also opened up a new arena of study, a new and rich historiography of women in the making of social history, which enables women progressives and working women activists to participate more fully in the ideological and political battles for a new social order.

One of the main objectives of this study was to show that there is indeed a proletariat in Swaziland. Contrary to the kinds of reactionary arguments put forward by the likes of Margo Russell who claims that "Land, the theoretical alternative to wage labour, is available to all Swazi and most avail themselves of it".(1) Therefore, according to Russell, there is no landless, free proletariat in Swaziland. This argument is not only gender blind and historically ignorant, it is also empirically incorrect and academically dishonest. The myth of a classless African society which implied the

exclusion of African societies from the trend of Socialist transformation by denying the existence of a proletariat, has been shown to be part of the colonial and neo-colonial ideological propaganda which attempts to keep Africa in the orbit of imperialist domination. We have shown in this study that the Swazi working class can boast of a history of struggle against capital which dates back almost 100 years. The uneven process of proletarianisation within different sectors of the economy and the phenomenon of migratory labour, are merely characteristics of capitalism within the specificity of Southern Africa, and cannot be used to deny the existence of a proletariat in Swaziland.

The Swazi proletariat is very real, and over the last thirty years it has grown rapidly in response to the huge inflows of Multinational Capital and the extension of capitalist commodity relations throughout the economy. What is quite obvious from our study is that the working class in the sugar industry is militant, articulate and conscious of its antagonistic relationship with capital and the state, and is preparing to take up the challenge of class struggle.

The past twenty years have been 'quiet' years because capital and the neo-colonial state had ceased the initiative from the working people by detaining their leaders, denying them trade union and other rights, and using other forms of ideological and political repression against them. But as the struggle against imperialism has intensified in the region, it has had very important political consequences for the Swazi working class. The

demands for Trade Union rights, for better wages and living conditions and the rejection of racism and nepotism, are some of the signs of a rising consciousness among the workers of their class interests.

We would like to argue that, together with the workers in mining (iron ore, asbestos and coal) as well as workers in the timber industry, the workers in the sugar industry, and especially those at Ubombo Ranches represent an advanced section of the Swazi working class. The context of multinational capitalism of necessity has given rise to an advanced working class in the Swazi economy, despite the use of backward labour practices and the tendency of labour to be seasonal.

This section must be mobilised to assume a vanguard role in the demand for democracy in the society, and for the overthrow of the feudalist regime which presently collaborates with imperialism in the domination and exploitation of the working people of Swaziland.

As well as leading the fight for a just and democratic society in their country, these workers must take an active and supportive stand on the struggle against racism and capitalism in South Africa. The success of the South African revolution will have major implications for the Swazi proletariat and for the rest of the Swazi people, and therefore the alliance between Swazi and South African workers must be encouraged and strengthened in the interests of a free Southern Africa and for the construction of socialism in the region.

1. M. Russell "Does Swaziland Have a Proletariat?" Post-Graduate Seminar, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, November, 1985.

NOTE ON PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Questionnaire Schedule applied to 275 men and 165 women sugar workers at Ubombo Ranches Company, June, 1980.
2. Recorded two hour (taped) interview with two workers' leaders, August, 1981.
3. Field Reports by student researchers, June, 1980.
4. Questionnaire (mail) to management of the three sugar companies (Ubombo Ranches, Mhlume Sugar Company and Simunye Sugar Company), October-December, 1983.

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Appendix I

Sample of workers in Company Villages or Sections - Ubombo Ranches Company, 1980

		Men (276)		Women (165)	
Date of Interview	Village	Married	Not married	Married	Not married
23.6.80	Usutu	12	18	5	5
24.6.80	Nyetane	16	11	5	16
25.6.80	Majombe	22	15	5	16
26.6.80	Qokwane	16	15	3	11
27.6.80	Sangwaluma	28	16	9	7
28.6.80	Shonalanga	4	6	11	14
30.6.80	Sivunga	27	14	5	7
1.7.80	Maphaphini	10	18	5	10
2.7.80	Poortzicht	15	13	4	24
Total		150	126	55	110

Appendix II

Table 1 - World Raw Sugar Price by Months 1/

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1st Q.	2nd Q.	3rd Q.	4th Q.	Ave.
								Cents per pound									
1970	3.12	3.23	3.44	3.61	3.75	3.82	3.86	3.89	3.93	3.99	4.18	4.16	3.26	3.73	3.89	4.11	3.75
1971	4.73	4.83	4.71	4.61	4.35	4.14	4.20	4.37	3.99	4.18	4.20	5.95	4.76	4.37	4.19	4.78	4.52
1972	8.25	8.62	8.73	7.29	7.01	6.58	5.58	6.28	7.04	7.42	7.25	9.08	8.53	6.96	6.30	7.92	7.43
1973	9.40	9.06	8.89	9.06	9.67	9.77	9.81	9.09	9.01	9.56	10.14	11.83	9.12	9.50	9.30	10.51	9.61
1974	15.32	21.28	21.27	21.77	23.65	23.67	25.40	31.45	34.35	39.63	57.17	44.97	19.29	23.03	30.40	47.26	29.99
1975	38.32	33.72	26.50	24.06	17.38	13.83	17.06	18.73	15.45	14.09	13.40	13.29	32.85	18.42	17.08	13.59	20.49
1976	14.04	13.52	14.92	14.06	14.58	12.99	13.21	9.99	8.16	8.03	7.91	7.54	14.16	13.88	10.45	7.83	11.58
1977	8.37	8.56	8.98	10.12	8.94	7.82	7.38	7.61	7.30	7.08	7.07	8.09	8.64	8.96	7.43	7.41	8.11
1978	8.77	8.48	7.74	7.59	7.33	7.23	6.43	7.08	8.17	8.96	8.01	8.00	8.33	7.38	7.23	8.32	7.82
1979	7.57	8.24	8.47	7.82	7.86	8.14	8.52	8.85	9.91	11.93	13.69	14.86	8.09	7.94	9.09	13.49	9.66
1980	17.23	23.03	20.12	21.61	31.33	31.61	28.12	31.98	35.12	41.09	37.94	29.00	20.13	28.18	31.74	36.01	29.02
1981	28.04	24.27	21.77	17.90	15.08	16.35	16.32	14.76	11.66	12.13	11.96	12.96	24.69	16.44	14.25	12.35	16.93
1982	12.99	13.05	11.24	9.53	8.12	6.85	7.83	6.80	5.90	5.91	6.50	6.27	12.43	8.17	6.84	6.23	8.42
1983	5.98	6.40	6.18	6.71	9.27	10.80	10.53	10.52	9.46	9.67	8.52	7.82	6.19	8.93	10.17	8.67	8.49
1984	6.95	6.58	6.42	5.96	5.58	5.48	4.51	4.01	4.11	4.66	4.41	3.51	6.65	5.67	4.21	4.19	5.18
1985	3.59	3.66	3.78	3.37	2.77								3.68				

1/ 1961-1970, Contract No. 8 - f.o.b. stowed Caribbean port (including Brazil) bagged. 1971 through October 1977.
Contract No. 11 - f.o.b. stowed Caribbean port (including Brazil) bulk. November 1977 through December 1978.
International Sugar Agreement Price, f.o.b. stowed Caribbean port, in bulk. 1979 - current.
Contract No. 11 - f.o.b. stowed Caribbean port (including Brazil) bulk.

Source: Coffee, Sugar & Cocoa Exchange, Inc.

APPENDIX III

TABLE - REGISTERED TRADE UNIONS - DECEMBER 1965

	NAME OF TRADE UNION	DATE OF REGISTRATION
1.	The Swaziland Pulp and Timber Workers' Union	25.10.62
2.	The Swaziland Milling Workers' Union	3.12.62
3.	The Swaziland Railway Workers' and Railway Construction Workers' Union	13.12.62
4.	The Swaziland Sugar Workers' Union	4. 3.63
5.	The Swaziland Commercial, Technical and Allied Workers' Union	8. 5.63
6.	The Swaziland Transport and General Workers' Union	15.10.63
7.	Swaziland Mineworkers' Trade Union	23.10.63
8.	The Swaziland Citrus, Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers' Union	23.10.63
9.	Swaziland Warehouse Workers' Council	22. 1.64
10.	The Swaziland National Union of Nurses	22. 3.64
11.	The Swaziland National Union of Teachers	1. 5.64
12.	Swaziland Building and Construction Workers' Industrial Union	9. 4.64
13.	Swaziland National Union of Civil Servants	22. 5.64
14.	Swaziland Government Industrial Workers' Union	29. 7.64
15.	The Swaziland Association of Local Government Officers	26. 7.65

Source: Labour Department Report, Mbabane 1966-1967.

APPENDIX IV

SWAZILAND SUGAR ASSOCIATION ESTATE PERFORMANCE

ESTATE	GROWER	AREA UNDER CANE (HA)	AREA CUT
SEASON		1976/77	
Hurlingham	Elliot, J.	190,5	189,4
Tambakulu	Calder, N.	1239,6	1239,6
Umbuluzi		1193,3	1178,1
MAMC	Ley, D.	280,0	275,0
Volindi	James, P.	98,6	97,1
SIS	Taylor, M.	1429,3	1217,0
Kyalami/ Kwamadevu	Johnson, M.	151,9	127,1
Sihoya	Matiwane, O.	130,5	130,0
Mankantshane		19,0	18,0
Mhlume	Fraser, T.	4924,0	4013,6
VIF	Smallholders	866,1	830,8
VIF	Dlamini, J.	23,6	23,6
	Myeni, S.	24,0	24,0
	Simelane, B.	21,2	18,4
	Qwabe, J.	24,0	21,6
	Nxumalo, D.	23,3	23,3
		10638,9	9426,6
Jozlind (Pty) Ltd.	Scheepers, J.	196,7	134,5
Nsoko Planters	Rautenbach, H.	204,3	201,9
Tibiyotaka Ngwane	Crookes, D.	1007,4	984,6
SD Citrus	Scheepers	74,0	50,5
Big Bend Sug. Estate	Todd, G.	1037,7	984,9
Broadland (Pty) Ltd.	Durandt, H.	159,8	36,0
Ubombo Ranches	Crookes, D.	5050,5	4765,6
Hlandeni	Nunes, M.	35,5	35,3
Canterbury	Scheepers, G.	440,3	372,0
Riverside Farm	Nunes, M.	58,0	32,8
Bar J	Hulley, R.	493,9	452,3
Mkyabomvu) Twin Ridge)	Garland, R.	237,5	202,4
Savolla Valley	Garland, R.	46,5	1,3
Crookes Plantations	Darby, D.	508,5	458,7
Langplaas	Delport, C.	99,6	38,5
Picardie	Hawarden, T.	17,9	17,9
Valley Estate	du Preez, J.	136,0	34,0
Matlock	Abell, J.	89,4	84,3
		9893,5	8887,5

7.2.2a/331 April 1977

Source: Swaziland Sugar Association (SSA).